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JOHN WILKES ESQ.^R

*Engraved by Caroline Watson after a Picture
by Pine painted about the Year 1763.*

Published Nov 20 1794 by Richard Phillips 11 St Paul's Church Yard.

THE
CORRESPONDENCE
OF THE LATE
JOHN WILKES,
WITH HIS FRIENDS,
PRINTED FROM THE
ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS,
IN WHICH ARE INTRODUCED
MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE,
BY JOHN ALMON.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

London:
PRINTED FOR RICHARD PHILLIPS,
No. 73, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

By T. GILLET, Salisbury Square.

1805.

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1805

vol 185

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE LORD MAYOR,
THE ALDERMEN, AND COMMON-COUNCIL,
OF THE
CITY OF LONDON.

MY LORD, AND GENTLEMEN,

THE City of London has ever been the friend of those oppressed by the instruments of power: Mr. Wilkes is a recent and eminent instance of this generous and patriotic disposition.

When by illegal means his house had been plundered, and his person driven into exile, the City of London shewed a laudable attention to his sufferings: not as the individual of a party; but as a martyr to public li-

berty, struggling in the defence of the insulted laws and violated constitution of his country.

The firm and glorious stand which he made against the inroads of tyranny and arbitrary power, has placed his name on a level with those of Hampden and of Sydney. And though he wanted the purse of the former to carry him to the end in his bold career, his zeal and courage were in no respect inferior. That pecuniary want he supplied by ardour and perseverance, by consistency and resolution, in pursuit of the measures which he undertook for the punishment of ministers, and for the recovery of the people's indefeasible rights.

But in this contention he was nearly broken down by the weight of the combined force

of malice and corruption ; when the CITY OF LONDON, to her immortal honour, rescued her oppressed citizen from indigence, and placed him in affluence ; asserted her own claims to humanity and patriotism ; and to the title of being the first city in the world for WEALTH, added the proud distinction of being the first for JUSTICE.

That this most virtuous and most honourable principle may be inherited by her sons for ever, is the ardent wish of him who is,

my lord, and gentlemen,

with the highest esteem,

your most obedient servant,

J. ALMON.

Box-Moor,

Near HEMEL-HEMPSTED, HERTS,

November 19, 1804.

P R E F A C E.

HAD Mr. Wilkes been his own biographer, this work would never have been meditated. It is true, he wrote *some* sketches of *particular parts* of his life; but in such a peculiar style of indulgence, as made them totally improper for the public eye; and after his death, his daughter, influenced by the most honourable motives of delicacy, and of dutiful love and esteem, to the person and memory of a dear and affectionate father, thought she could not better shew her gratitude and filial piety than by burning those sketches.

Another biographer must therefore resort to other means, to enable him to state with

accuracy the events of Mr. Wilkes's chequered and memorable life.

The editor's acquaintance with Mr. Wilkes began in the month of October, 1761; upon the resignation of Mr. Pitt, afterwards earl of Chatham: and was continued on the most friendly, affectionate, and confidential terms, till his death, in December, 1797. During that period no material circumstance occurred in the condition of either that was not mutually known.

But these memoirs are not derived from an individual source. They owe their present state to very considerable assistance.

Mr. Wilkes's papers were bequeathed by his daughter to the late Mr. PETER ELM斯LEY,

a bookseller in the Strand.* After Mr. ELMLEY's death, the editor applied to his executor for assistance in compiling his memoirs of Mr. Wilkes. In consequence of this application he was favoured with the perusal of many of Mr. Wilkes's original papers, together with permission to make such use of them as might answer his purpose. For this communication his best acknowledgments are due.

His thanks are also due to the reverend JOHN HARRIS, of Aylesbury, for much information which could not have been obtained elsewhere. To JOSEPH PAICE, of Newington, esq. trustee for Mrs. Wilkes upon her separation, and one of miss Wilkes's executors, he is highly indebted for a series of

* Mr. Almon had relinquished trade many years before this period.

the most interesting information ; and for a very gratifying and honourable correspondence, containing many important particulars. To JOHN NICHOLS, esq. of Farringdon ward without ; one of Mr. Wilkes's deputies, and his particular friend. To SOLOMON WADD, esq. deputy of Bassishaw ward ; another particular and humane friend of Mr. Wilkes. To JAMES BOUDON, esq. of the chamberlain's office, Guildhall, London ; another of Miss Wilkes's executors. And to several other gentlemen, and to some ladies.

IN this work, it has not been thought necessary to reprint any of Mr. Wilkes's tracts ; except his letter to the electors of Aylesbury,—his letter to the duke of Grafton,—his letter on his public conduct ; and his Introduction to the History of England, which his daughter intended to have printed a short time before her death.

These are so nearly connected with the most material circumstances of his life, that they could not, with propriety, be omitted.

It may not be improper to give here a list of Mr. Wilkes's other literary productions.

The first is an account of Hampden's death : in which he differs from lord Clarendon, and all the other historians, in describing his wound as not coming from the enemy.

Some political essays, printed in the St. James's Chronicle, in the year 1761 ; at the time when George Colman, Bonnell Thornton, and Robert Lloyd, were contributors to that paper.

Observations on the papers relative to the rupture with Spain. With two papers of the Monitor, on the same subject. 1762.

He occasionally amused himself with translating some of the Odes of Anacreon ; but these he never printed, nor has the manuscript been found among his papers.

The *North Briton*, from No. 1, published on the 5th of June, 1762, to No. 45, published on the 23d of April, 1763. In two volumes.

A few copies of a *third* volume of the *North Briton* were printed at his own private press ; but were never published.

A Peep into Futurity. Written in 1763.

Annual verses on Miss Wilkes's birth-day. Some written in France ; some in the king's-bench prison ; and some in London. All printed in the Foundling Hospital for Wit.

A letter to the right honourable George Grenville, occasioned by his publication of the speech which he made in the house of commons, on the motion for expelling Mr. Wilkes, on the third of February, 1769. With an appendix of papers therein referred to.

His controversial letters with Mr. Horne, in 1770 and 1771.

His addresses to the city of London, and to the county of Middlesex.

His speeches in Parliament from 1774. Two volumes. Another edition in one volume. The last edition is the best. But notes are wanting to elucidate many passages and allusions.

It was not the editor's wish, or design, to increase the size of this work, by inserting any of the tracts, or papers, contained in the preceding list, because they had been already printed ; though it is now difficult to obtain many of them. But if an edition of Mr. Wilkes's works should be desired, they may again, with advantage, appear before the public, with the addition of much explanatory matter, by the present editor.

The spirit of party, and animosity, which had been raised to destroy Mr. Wilkes, having now entirely subsided ; and his death having put an end to every possible resentment, his character will now be fairly judged of, from his own papers.

The letters to his daughter, selected by the editor, contain principles, the reverse of those

of lord Chesterfield to his son. One exhibits the fashionable refinements of vice ; the other is the pure emanation of virtuous paternal feeling.

In the early part of the history of Egypt, we read of a very extraordinary custom, that prevailed in that country. When any of their kings, or celebrated men, died, the people assembled round the corpse, and freely spoke their sentiments on the conduct and actions of the deceased : and according to the judgment of the majority, he was allowed or denied the rites of sepulchre. If these verdicts had been recorded, they would probably have afforded the best species of biography ; being the correct judgment of contemporaries, there could be no suspicion of fallacy. Happy might it have been for mankind, if this laudable custom had never been

abandoned ; but had continued through all ages, and been extended to all nations. These examples of public opinion would have deterred men from the commission of crimes, and animated others in the pursuit of virtue.

In defect of such custom, a work like the present, may enable posterity to decide on the pretensions of the person, whose history and opinions it records.

P. S. It may be proper for the editor to state that since his announcement of this work, he has been offered some collections of very trifling letters of Mr. Wilkes, in the possession of some persons who evinced more regard to their own pecuniary interests, than to the reputation of the writer, or the infor-

mation of the public.—Sedulously attentive to the expectation of his friends, in regard to the perfection of the work which he had announced, he paid due attention to these offers, but found that the letters themselves were wholly unworthy of the public eye, and so utterly insignificant and trifling, that it would have been indecorous, both in respect to the deceased and his readers, to have given them place in this collection. In short, they appeared to him to elucidate no traits of private character, nor to attach to any public interest.—His readers will, doubtless, feel with the editor on this subject, that miss Wilkes never suspected that any person connected with her family would have obtruded on the public any of Mr. Wilkes's papers or letters, besides those which she had formally bequeathed by her will.

*N. B. A considerable part of the letters of
Mr. Wilkes, in his own hand writing, are, for a
few weeks, left in the hands of the publisher, for
the inspection of any gentleman who may make
proper application to see them.*

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MEMOIRS
AND
CORRESPONDENCE
OF
JOHN WILKES, Esq.

A SHORT account of Mr. Wilkes's family will be proper to precede his Memoirs.

They were descended from the Wilkeses of Layton Beausert,* in the county of Bucks; for so they denominated themselves, and in the Heralds' Office the name of the town is written in this manner.

* New called Leighton Buzzard; which, Camden says, is a corruption of the original name. The town is in Bedfordshire; but so close to the border of Buckinghamshire, that the residence of the Wilkeses was literally in this latter county.

Edward Wilkes, who resided here in the reigns of James I. and Charles I., had three sons and a daughter; whom he christened by the names of the four Evangelists. The eldest was Matthew; the next, Mark; the third, Luke; and, to complete the analogy as far as practicable, the daughter was named Joan.

In the account in the Heralds' Office they are honoured with this encomium; 'They were all persons of reputation and respect.'

The above mentioned Luke Wilkes occupied the office of chief yeoman of his majesty's wardrobe, in the year 1670. This gentleman settled in London; and from him was descended Israel Wilkes, the father of the subject of these memoirs.

Mr. Israel Wilkes was bred a distiller, and was eminent in his profession; which, in his time, was very profitable. He lived in St. John's-square, Clerkenwell. He married miss Sarah Heaton, daughter of John Heaton, esq. a gentleman of considerable fortune; and by her became possessed of Hoxton-square,

and other property. She was a very amiable and very respectable lady; but a rigid dissenter. Mr. Wilkes was of the established church; but AFTER HE WAS MARRIED *he often went to meeting.* He lived in a splendid style; and kept a very elegant and sumptuous table for all his friends. Among the numerous persons who visited this family, were Mr. Mead, an eminent dry-salter on London-bridge, with his wife and daughter; who, being dissenters also, frequently went to the meeting-house in Southwood-lane at Highgate, in Mr. Wilkes's coach, which was always drawn by six horses—such was his love of external appearance!

Mr. Wilkes had three sons and two daughters. His eldest son was named Israel; and, being intended for a trade, at a proper age his father placed him in partnership with Mr. De Ponthieu, of Walbrook, London, a considerable Manchester agent: but either the partners not agreeing, or the agency not answering young Mr. Wilkes's expectations, after a few years the partnership was dis-

solved; and Mr. Wilkes went to New York, in North America, where he settled.

The second son was John Wilkes, the subject of these memoirs.

The youngest son was named Heaton. He succeeded to his father's business in the year 1761; when his father died, at the age of 72: but was unfortunate in trade. He then entered into the coal trade, in which he was also unsuccessful. Towards the close of the year 1803 he died, in Vine-street, Piccadilly; not in affluent circumstances.

Of Mr. Wilkes's daughters the eldest died unmarried. She lived secluded from the world for many years, in Hart-street, Bloomsbury. She had apartments up two pair of stairs; with thick blinds before the windows, to keep out the day-light: and she burnt either a lamp or a candle continually. She died on the 4th of October, 1767.

Mr. Wilkes's other daughter, Mary, married first Samuel Stork, esq. of London, a West India merchant. She married, secondly, George Hayley, esq. alderman of London;

an American merchant, and one of the representatives of the city; by whom she had a daughter, married to sir Robert Baker, bart. of Richmond. After the death of alderman Hayley, she went to America; and there married Mr. Jeffreys. In 1803 they came to England, and resided at Bath.

OF THE MEAD FAMILY.

THIS family was descended from the Meads of Bragenham, in the parish of Soulbury in Buckinghamshire, a few miles from Layton Beausert. They were settled there in the year 1523.

It is not necessary here to give a genealogical table of the family. It is sufficient to say, that Robert Mead, one of the members of it, was settled at Aylesbury at the beginning of the last century,* and practised as an

* His wife is buried within the altar rail of Aylesbury church. Upon the stone is this inscription: "Here

attorney there. He was concerned in the celebrated case of Ashby and White; and was declared by the house of commons guilty of a breach of privilege, in prosecuting, as an attorney, several actions against White and others, then late constables of Aylesbury.*

His brother Nathaniel was a serjeant at law. He was knighted, and elected member for Aylesbury in the year 1714, in the first parliament after the accession of the house of Hanover.† The property of this family descended to Mr. William Mead, a dry-salter, who lived upon London-bridge; and who married miss Sherbroke, daughter of — Sherbroke, esq. a gentleman of considerable property, living in the neighbourhood of Cheneys, in Bucks. They were both dis-

Lieth all that was mortal of Mrs. Ann Mead, wife of Mr. Robert Mead; who lived most justly beloved until the 8th of May 1724, in the 55th year of her age; and then died universally and worthily lamented."

* Commons' Journals, vol. xiv. p. 445.

† Ibid. vol. xviii. p. 23.

senters. By his wife he had several children, but only one survived. This was a daughter, who became the wife of the subject of these memoirs. Mr. Mead died in the year 1722.

The celebrated Dr. Mead was descended from a junior branch of this family. Miss Wilkes says, in a letter to her father, written at Epsom, the 7th of September 1779: ‘ We ‘ are now going to Mrs. Nicholls’s, daughter ‘ to Dr. Mead, and my mother’s nearest rela-‘ tion after me.’ Mrs. Nicholls was then the widow of Frank Nicholls, M. D. physician to the king.

The Meads of Essex were a collateral branch of this family. They were very distantly related to miss Wilkes; and the two ladies, who were acquainted with her, enjoyed her warmest esteem.

OF JOHN WILKES, ESQ. DURING HIS MINORITY.

HE was born on the 17th of October, 1727. He received the rudiments of his education at the town of Hertford. Being a youth of very sprightly talents, and great promise, his father intended him for the profession of the law; and became so partial to him, that he spared no expence on his education, which occasioned some disadvantage to the other children. His mother was not less partial to him; and he was also a great favourite with Mrs. Mead. Having staid some time at Hertford, he was placed under the tuition of a private preceptor; a dissenting clergyman, named Leeson, who had kept a small seminary for a select number of young gentlemen, at the vicarage house at Aylesbury.

There was a particular design concealed under this conduct; which, in fact, was secretly influenced by Mrs. Mead—for Mr.

Mead was at that time dead. Mrs. Mead, who lived at Aylesbury-house, had a daughter, an only child; who not only was a heiress, but was born to a large fortune from her mother's family also. It was the warm wish of Mrs. Mead, that an intimacy might take place, and grow up, between her daughter and young Mr. Wilkes. Mrs. Wilkes and Mrs. Mead were upon terms of the purest affection: they were both dissenters.

When young Mr. Wilkes had been some time under Mr. Leeson's care, his father resolved to send him, with his preceptor, to the university of Leyden, to finish his studies. Here he cultivated his taste for the Latin classics, with great assiduity. He also entered into the Greek classics, but not with the same partiality. Of all the Latin writers, he was most attached to Cicero and Virgil. Tacitus he preferred to Livy, but with no enthusiasm for either.

Of Mr. Wilkes's academical acquirements, no eulogy need be attempted. He owed more to his own application, and to study, than to

the assistance of the university. These were his best preceptors. The university did something, but his own ardour and perseverance did more. They made him a most excellent Latin classic, and a tolerable Greek one. He never failed to cultivate and improve his acquaintance with the best writers in those languages; so that when he entered into the wide field of politics, which was a few months after the accession of his present majesty, he was as complete a scholar as he could have been had he remained at Oxford or Cambridge, from the time of his leaving Hertford. To this he added the easy and elegant manners of a gentleman: the refinements of the most amiable and fashionable politeness; with a happy flow of spirits, and a perfect command of language—the last acquired entirely by his own industry, observation, and taste. The editor of the present work has often heard him say, “What could I learn from the schools of Hertford and Aylesbury?”

When he had finished his studies at Leyden, he made a tour through the Dutch pro-

vinces, the Austrian Netherlands, and part of Germany. He could not, at that time, visit the French territories on account of the war.

While Mr. Wilkes was thus engaged abroad, another scene was preparing at home. Miss Mead, being known for a young lady of considerable wealth, did not want for suitors. Among these was lord Bellenden : but as neither his lordship, nor any one of the other gentlemen, was agreeable to Mrs. Mead, their addresses were discontinued. Lord Bellenden, however, submitted reluctantly ; and was supposed to have made some progress. As the friendship between Mrs. Mead and the Wilkeses still subsisted as cordially as ever, it was settled between them, that as soon as young Mr. Wilkes returned to England, he should pay his addresses to miss Mead ; and, if she received him favourably, a marriage should take place between them.

MARRIAGE OF MR. WILKES AND MISS MEAD.

IN the year 1749 Mr. John Wilkes returned to England at the request of his father ; and, agreeably to the request of both his parents, paid frequent visits to Mrs. Mead, at Aylesbury-house. His manners were elegant and polite, and his conversation gay and entertaining. In a short time miss Mead found herself attached to him ; and in the month of October, of the same year, they were married, to the apparent satisfaction of all parties.

Mrs. Mead now quitted Aylesbury, for the winter ; and resided at her house in Red-lion-court, behind St. Sepulchre's church, London : a possession derived from her family, which her husband had settled upon her, and made part of her jointure. Mr. and Mrs. Wilkes lived in a very comfortable manner at Aylesbury ; and when winter came on, they removed to Red-lion-court, and lived with their mother.

During the time of Mr. Wilkes's residence abroad, he had become acquainted with the ingenious Mr. Andrew Baxter, author of a work entitled, "An Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul; wherein its Immateriality is evinced, from the Principles of Reason and Philosophy." He was also author of "Matho; sive, Cosmotheoria Puerilis; Dialogus: in quo prima Elementa de Mundi Ordine et Ornatu proponuntur, &c." And such was Mr. Baxter's esteem and attachment to his young friend, that he dedicated one of his publications to him, and carried on a friendly intercourse by letter until his own death.

The following is a letter from Mr. Baxter to Mr. Wilkes; written at Whittingham, in the county of East Lothian in Scotland: dated 29th January, 1750.

" MY DEAREST MR. WILKES,

" YOUR letter of December 12, 1749, alarmed me, by hearing you had had such a dangerous fall from your horse. Moderate

exercise is good : but dangerous exercise, such as riding a fiery horse, is not commendable ; and if you would oblige Mrs. Wilkes, if you would oblige all your friends, and all good men (who conceive great hopes from you), you will be more cautious for the future. We had a terrible instance in the newspapers lately, of a man who got his death by such a fall.

“ As to altering any thing in the address to you before the appendix, I durst not do it without your participation ; unless you had suggested something which you would have changed : and by this time I suppose it is published. I wish you and Mrs. Wilkes all possible prosperity ; and am, &c.

AND. BAXTER.”

In another letter to Mr. Wilkes, Mr. Baxter says :

“ I HAVE employed my time, of late, in considering the difference, or controversy, between the English and foreign philosophers, concerning the force of bodies mov-

ing in free spaces ; which in its consequence spreads far and wide through natural philosophy. I have shewn demonstratively, that the experiments brought by the foreign philosophers to establish their new theory, are applicable entirely to the English computation, which they beautifully illustrate ; and that these learned gentlemen have quite mistaken them.

“ We talked much of this, you may remember, in the Capuchins’ garden at Spa. I have finished the *prima cura* of it, in the dialogue way : and design to inscribe it to my dear John Wilkes ; whom, under a borrowed name, I have made one of the interlocutors. If you are against this whim (which a passionate love to you has made me conceive), I will drop it.

“ In the mean time I shall publish an Appendix to the Enquiry, which you must give me leave to inscribe to you in the following manner :

‘ To John Wilkes, of Aylesbury, in the county
of Buckingham, esquire.

‘ SIR,

‘ THE subject of our conversation in the
‘ Capuchins’ garden at Spa, in the summer
‘ of 1745, still lies by me, in the dress it was
‘ first put in. I have not leisure, at present,
‘ to prepare it for the public view. In the
‘ interim, I send you the following sheets, as
‘ a token of my sincere respect. It is a plea-
‘ sure to think on the time we spent so agree-
‘ ably together.

‘ I am, Sir,

‘ Your most obedient servant,

‘ AND. BAXTER.’

The Appendix was afterwards published,
with the above dedication.

The writers of the Biographical Dictionary (article Baxter) say: “ He was a man of great humanity and candour. His candour appears most strikingly from this: though Mr. Wilkes had made himself very obnoxious to the Scottish nation in general, yet Mr. Baxter kept up with him an affectionate cor-

respondence to the last; even after he was unable to write to him with his own hand."

On the 5th of August, 1750, miss Wilkes was born, in Red-lion-court; whose very dutiful and most affectionate letters will make a considerable figure in this work.

In a short time after the birth of his daughter, Mr. Wilkes took a house in Great George-street, Westminster. He very much disliked the mansion in Red-lion-court. Though the house was good, yet the situation and neighbourhood were disagreeable: he wished to reside in the fashionable part of the town. This was his first error: and hence arose the causes of the subsequent disagreements between him and Mrs. Wilkes.

His new house required an expensive establishment; and introduced a style and manner of living very different to what Mrs. Wilkes had been accustomed to. A variety of company, and splendid dinners almost every day, were indeed such scenes of dissipation as must be distressing to a mind that had from early life been habituated to eco-

nomy. But, what was infinitely worse, and beyond the power of forbearance, was, his introducing into his house a number of juvenile, gay, bacchanalians, of dissolute manners and vulgar language. This could not fail to shock any lady of sensibility and delicacy. Mrs. Wilkes remonstrated ; he retorted : she abandoned his table, and left him to treat his guests as he pleased. This conduct has, by some persons, been thought a great fault on her side. Perhaps it was ; but the provocation to it must be acknowledged to have been very strong.

Among the persons whom Mr. Wilkes thus brought into his house, were Thomas Potter, esq. member for Aylesbury, and son to the archbishop of that name ; lord Sandwich ; sir Francis Dashwood, afterwards lord Le Despenser ; and many others, of similar disposition and manners. Potter, however, was the worst ; and was indeed the ruin of Mr. Wilkes, who was not a bad man early, or naturally. But Potter poisoned his morals. It is true, Potter had a great deal of vivacity ;

and his conversation was replete with wit, which made it agreeable to young men: but he was often coarse, and almost obscene; which must have been unpardonably offensive to a lady of Mrs. Wilkes's peculiar delicacy.

Mr. Wilkes's home being dull, he was easily seduced by the gaiety of others. Such are the unhappy consequences of an early vicious acquaintance!

There was another circumstance, of no small moment in this part of our consideration. This was, the disparity in the ages of Mr. and Mrs. Wilkes. When they were married, she was above thirty-two, and he was not quite twenty-two. Ever since the time of his emancipation from school, he had been familiarized to juvenile gaieties; and he was still too young to cast them off suddenly. Mrs. Wilkes, on the contrary, had lived a recluse, under the roof and subjected to the restraint of her mother; and she was now advanced too far in life to alter habits which had been so long contracted under the esteem

and affection of a parent whom she dutifully loved, and almost adored.

An opinion has been circulated, that religion was the first cause of the disagreement between Mr. and Mrs. Wilkes; she being a strict dissenter, and he a member of the church of England. But, whatever credit this supposition may have obtained, it is entirely groundless. Mr. Wilkes was not a man likely to quarrel with a lady on the score of religion. While Mr. and Mrs. Wilkes lived in Red-lion-court they frequently went to meeting together; but he always *communicated* with the church of England. At Aylesbury he constantly went to church on Sunday, generally twice; and received the sacrament there. He subscribed annually, for many years, twelve guineas to a fund for supporting the civil and religious rights of the dissenters; at the head of which, according to Mr. Wilkes's own words, 'was the late Dr. Benjamin Avery, a gentleman of the most respectable character.' These facts do not evince any bigoted or obstinate tenacity concerning religion.

The difference in the tempers, and dispositions, of Mr. and Mrs. Wilkes, was the true and principal cause of all their disagreements: had he never brought improper persons into his house, or had she been inclined to a little indulgence in gay life, in all probability they might have been happy. There is a short paper in the second volume of the Political Register, page 416, written (to the editor's certain knowledge) by Mr. Wilkes, in answer to a paper printed in the St. James's Chronicle of May 19, 1768; from which it may not be improper to make the following extract:

‘ I will take this opportunity of saying a
‘ word or two of Mr. Wilkes’s wife. I have
‘ heard some of his friends remark, that she
‘ is perhaps the woman in the world the
‘ most unfit for him; and the only one to
‘ whom he would not have been an uxorious
‘ husband, for he loves a domestic life; but,

‘ Sic visum Veneri; cui placet impares
‘ Formas atque animos sub juga ahenea
‘ Sua mittere cum joco.

‘ She was certainly a large fortune ; but, ‘ unhappily, half as old again as Mr. Wilkes, ‘ when he married her. I have often dined ‘ with them, both in town and country. He ‘ was admired as an extremely civil and com- ‘ plaisant husband ; rather cold, but exactly ‘ well bred : and set an example of polite and ‘ obliging behaviour in his family, which ‘ many of those who find fault with him ‘ would do well to imitate. *Her reputation* ‘ is *unspotted* ; and she still possesses Mr. ‘ Wilkes’s esteem, though not his tender- ‘ ness.’

And in one of Mr. Wilkes’s letters to Mrs. Stafford (of Holt, in Berkshire, and Russel-street, Bath), dated 4th March 1778, he thus describes his marriage :

‘ Now one word on my own situation. ‘ In my non-age, to please an indulgent fa- ‘ ther, I married a woman half as old again ‘ as myself ; of a large fortune,—my own ‘ being also that of a gentleman. It was a ‘ sacrifice to Plutus, not to Venus. I never ‘ lived with her, in the strict sense of the

‘ word; nor have I seen her for nearly twenty years. I stumbled at the very threshold of the temple of Hymen :

‘ The God of Love was not a bidden guest,
‘ Nor present at his own mysterious feast.

‘ Are such ties, at such a time of life, binding?—and are school-boys to be dragged to
‘ the altar?’

BERWICK ELECTION.

THE general election of 1754 was now approaching. Mr. Wilkes’s friends strongly urged him to come into parliament. Potter pressed him very much: it was the only place, he said, in which a young man of Mr. Wilkes’s talents could commence the world with *éclat*. This flattered his vanity exceedingly: and a seat in parliament was now the great object of his desires. At Berwick, he was informed, there was a probable opening;

and that the Delaval interest, which had been very powerful there, might be opposed with success. This was his principal inducement. It is the misfortune of our nature, to be easily duped into a belief of what we wish to believe. He resolved to go to Berwick. This indiscreet measure, which seemed to border almost upon rashness, was opposed by the earnest supplications of Mrs. Wilkes ; of his own father, who was partial to his daughter-in-law ; and of Mrs. Mead, her mother. They dreaded the consequences of this new line of conduct : as threatening perpetual unhappiness to Mrs. Wilkes ; and as laying the foundation of his ruin, by launching him into a series of convivialities and expences, the extent and mischiefs of which no one could estimate. But he had taken his resolution, and was not to be dissuaded. In this first step of his political career, he exhibited that principle of firmness of mind (as he called it) which, in all political points, never abandoned him through life.

He accordingly went to Berwick; and on the 16th of April, 1754, addressed the electors in the following speech:

“ GENTLEMEN,

“ I BEG leave to offer myself a candidate to represent you in parliament. I came here with the utmost pleasure, to make you a tender of my services, from the assurances I had received of your steady attachment to the cause of liberty. I early embarked in the same generous cause, and have always had it nearest to my heart.

“ I am thoroughly sensible of the excellence of the constitution of this happy country, and my utmost efforts shall be exerted for the preservation of it. In this, and in every other case, I hope to be your faithful representative; and while I am delivering your sentiments, and discharging my duty to my constituents, I shall have the satisfaction of serving a cause which I have valued beyond every thing.

“ If I am so happy as to succeed, I assure

you, gentlemen, I shall ever be watchful over the interests of this nation in general ; and the good of this corporation shall have my particular attention. It shall always be my favourite study. My warmest endeavours shall be employed for you, and I shall esteem myself happy in every opportunity of doing you a real service.

“ Gentlemen, I come here *uncorrupting*, and I promise you I shall ever be *uncorrupted*. As I never will take a bribe, so I will never offer one. I should think myself totally unworthy of the great and important trust I am now soliciting, if I sought to obtain it by the violation of the laws of my country. I hold them to be sacred ; and I think the happiness and security of every man depends on the observance of them.

“ Gentlemen, I have no private views : my sole ambition is to serve my country, and to contribute to the preservation of the invaluable privileges which this nation enjoys beyond any other in the world. I shall act steadily on these principles ; and therefore I

hope for the honour of your protection and encouragement, and shall endeavour to convince you of my sincerest regards, and warmest gratitude."

He polled a hundred and ninety-two votes, but was unsuccessful.

It has been asserted, in some periodical and other publications, that a letter was addressed to Mr. Wilkes by Mr. Grenville (who at that time held the post of treasurer of the navy), assuring him that he had the good wishes of the ministry; but lord Temple declared to the editor of the present work, that he had never heard of such a letter.

Notwithstanding Mr. Wilkes's fine speech about virtue and patriotism, this experiment cost him between three and four thousand pounds.

SEPARATION OF MR. AND MRS. WILKES.

WHEN Mr. Wilkes returned from Berwick, he did not find that tender reception at home which, notwithstanding his rude and abrupt departure, he thought he had a right to expect. On the contrary, he met with reproaches ; which, in such a case, imprudence deserves, but which only indiscretion would use.

After this event, he for some time principally resided at Bath and in London, indulging in all the gay and fashionable scenes of dissipation with lord Sandwich, sir Francis Dashwood (afterwards lord Le Despenser), sir William Stanhope, sir Thomas Stapleton, Thomas Potter, Paul Whitehead (not the laureat), &c. &c. : at the Dilletante, in Palace-yard ; Medmenham - abbey, near Marlow, Bucks ;* Beef-steak Club, in Covent-garden ; and other places.

* Some account of this institution is given in vol. iii. p. 60, of the present work.

This conduct made Mrs. Wilkes very unhappy. She anxiously wished for a separation. And here it must be admitted, that with the exception of a few venial faults, such as in the neglect of his table, and of the inferior articles of some domestic duty, her behaviour was strictly moral, seriously rational, and in all respects consistent. His, on the contrary, was irregular, dissipated, and licentious. Her father-in-law again interfered, and ardently endeavoured, by the most endearing and persuasive arguments, to obtain a reconciliation: but this was impossible; both parties had taken their resolutions. Mrs. Wilkes was principally influenced by her mother: Mr. Wilkes by his inclination, and passion for gay life. All further communication was now discontinued: it was mutually agreed to live apart; and a deed of separation was determined upon. The conditions of this contract have been variously stated by different persons, and always incorrectly. To obtain accurate intelligence on this point, the

editor applied to Mrs. Wilkes's trustee; who had, on many occasions, behaved with the greatest politeness and liberality, and had communicated to him much useful information which he could not have obtained from any other quarter. Upon this subject, part of his letter to the editor was as follows:

“ Newington, Surry, 7th June, 1804.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ As to the first question respecting the late Mr. Wilkes's allowance to his wife, it was two hundred pounds *per annum*; and was paid to me, as her banker, through the hands of Mr. Jacomb, solicitor. When a separation, under articles of mutual agreement, took place between Mr. and Mrs. Wilkes, (to obtain which she gave up to him certain property,) it was a condition that he should allow her two hundred pounds *per annum* during his life. Other conditions were, that she should have the privilege of living with her mother, or with whomever

she pleased ; and that she should occasionally see her daughter.* The articles were drawn up by the confidential friend of Mrs. Wilkes and her family, Mr. Snell, solicitor ; a character, in every view, of the first respectability. During his life, the payment was made through his hands : and after his decease, through the hands of Mr. Jacomb, his son-in-law and successor ; who had a great interest in the confidence and regard of Mrs. Wilkes and her family, founded on a much longer acquaintance than mine ; and who was a co-trustee, with me, under the wills of Mrs. Wilkes, her uncle Sherbrooke, and her mother Mead.

“ To your inquiry whether the estate at Aylesbury was purchased by Mr. Mead, the father of Mrs. Wilkes, or whether it was left

* She lived with her mother in the family town-house, in Red-lion-court, behind St. Sepulchre's church, London. She had also a small house at Clapham, which she occupied in the summer.

him by some relation,* I have only one chance, and that very slender, of obtaining an answer. I will immediately write to Mr. Israel Wilkes, elder brother of the late Mr. John Wilkes, at New York, where he has been many years resident; a highly respectable character, and now more than eighty years of age. He had longer acquaintance than myself with the Mead family; and the well-informed, sedate mind, which, when last I heard from him, he possessed without impair, affords the only chance of obtaining an answer to this question.

“ I am not unaware that a sister of the late Mr. Wilkes is living, and in England, widow of the late Mr. alderman Hayley, now wife of Mr. Jeffreys, an American; but that lady, I believe, has not the least knowledge that can solve your enquiry.

“ Believe me, sir,
your most obedient humble servant,
JOSEPH PRICE.”

* It was a prebendal estate; held of Lincoln, upon lives.

AYLESBURY ELECTION, 1757.

THOMAS POTTER, esq. who has been mentioned as Mr. Wilkes's most particular and most intimate acquaintance, was at this time member for the borough of Aylesbury. At the end of June 1757, he was appointed one of the vice-treasurers of Ireland; which vacated his seat in parliament. The writ for a new election was issued on the 1st of July.

There was a good deal of manœuvre and trick practised on this occasion. A private agreement was made between Mr. Potter and Mr. Wilkes, that if Mr. Potter could secure a seat in parliament for another borough, Mr. Wilkes should be elected for Aylesbury. Mr. Wilkes was very anxious of becoming representative for Aylesbury; that being the town in which he lived, and where part of his property lay: and circumstances proved favourable to his wishes.

Sir Robert Henley (afterwards earl of

Northington), member for Bath, had lately been appointed lord-keeper; in the room of lord Hardwicke, who had resigned the chancery: and Mr. Pitt (afterwards earl of Chatham), who was member for Oakhampton, was invited to the representation of Bath, which he accepted. Mr. Pitt's writ was moved for on the same day as Mr. Potter's;* and thus Oakhampton was left open. The business was very adroitly managed, by modes which we are yet too near the time to explain. It is sufficient to say, that Mr. Potter was elected for Oakhampton, and Mr. Wilkes for Aylesbury; and it may be said also, with the strictest truth, that this affair, from its commencement to its conclusion, cost Mr. Wilkes upwards of seven thousand pounds—(for he was the person who paid all)—to obtain one seat in parliament, and that for only three years. He might, at that time, have purchased a borough for the whole septennial period, for less money.

* Commons' Journals, vol. xxxvii. p. 926

The loss of so great a sum by one event, distressed him very much. Potter, to extricate him (as he pretended), introduced him to the Jews, and into annuity transactions with them.* In a short time, he felt the weight of these incumbrances press heavy upon him. On this occasion he had recourse to an act that forms the worst feature in his character: which was, an attempt to get possession of his wife's annuity. He first applied to her through a confidential channel, requesting a surrender of it: but this was refused. He next requested to see her: this was also refused. He then had recourse to law, thinking that he could set aside the deed of separation; and with this view, and in order to bring the whole matter before the court of king's-bench, he sued out a writ of habeas-corpus, which was served on Mrs. Mead, to bring Mrs. Wilkes before the court.

* See Mr. Wilkes's letters from Paris to Mr. Cotes vol. ii. p. 55, of this work.

Burrow, in his Reports, states the case in the following words :

‘ E. 31 G. 2. *Rex v. Mary Mead.* An habeas-corpus having issued, at the instance of ‘ John Wilkes, esq. to bring up the body of ‘ Mary Wilkes, wife of the said John Wilkes, ‘ and daughter of the said Mary Mead ; Mrs. ‘ Mead now brought her into court. The ‘ substance of the return was, that her hus- ‘ band (having used her very ill) did, in con- ‘ sideration of a great sum, which she gave ‘ him out of her separate estate, consent to ‘ her living alone ; executed articles of sepa- ‘ ration ; and covenanted (under a large pe- ‘ nalty) never to disturb her, or any person ‘ with whom she should live :—that she lived ‘ with her mother, at her own earnest desire ; ‘ and that the writ of habeas-corpus was taken ‘ out with a view of seizing her by force, or ‘ some other bad purpose. The court held ‘ this to be a formal renunciation, by the ‘ husband, of his natural right to seize her, ‘ or force her back to live with him : and

‘ they said, that any attempt of the husband
‘ to seize her by force and violence, would be
‘ a breach of the peace. They also declared,
‘ that any attempt made by the husband to
‘ molest her in her present return from West-
‘ minster-hall, would be a contempt of the
‘ court; and they told the lady, she was at
‘ full liberty to go where, and to whom, she
‘ pleased.’*

There was no further communication between Mr. and Mrs. Wilkes. Her annuity was regularly paid; and, as will be seen by the letters in this work, miss Wilkes dutifully and frequently visited her mother, but lived with her father.

* Burrow, Mansfield, 542.

FROM 1758 TO 1763.—THE MILITIA.

MR. WILKES being now in parliament, that situation gave him ample opportunity for increasing the number of his friends, particularly in the county of Buckingham. To earl Temple he paid his court with the purest and warmest sincerity. That nobleman always received him in the most gracious manner, with the utmost politeness and kindness. The new establishment of the militia was at this time the object of the public attention ; and Mr. Wilkes zealously gave all the assistance in his power to the support of that plan. Earl Temple had been recently appointed lord lieutenant of Buckinghamshire, on the death of the duke of Marlborough. The militia was not a popular measure in this county ; but by the influence of lord Temple, with the assistance of Mr. Wilkes and other gentlemen, it was at length carried into effect. The regiment was raised : and sir Francis Dashwood

(afterwards lord Le Despenser) was appointed colonel, and Mr. Wilkes lieutenant-colonel.

When sir Francis resigned, he sent the following letter to the officers of the regiment.

“ GENTLEMEN,

“ His majesty having done me the honour to appoint me his chancellor of the exchequer and under-treasurer, it becomes absolutely necessary for me to resign the commission of colonel of the Bucks regiment; which I did on Saturday last, the 29th of May 1762.

“ If the succession goes in the regiment (as I hope it will, and think it ought), then, I must add, my *successor* is a man of spirit, good sense, and civil deportment; who has shewn resolution and industry in putting this salutary measure into execution.”

Mr. Wilkes, on this event, was appointed colonel of the regiment.

LETTERS OF DR. BREWSTER, AUTHOR OF A
TRANSLATION OF PERSIUS, TO MR. WILKES.

LETTER I.

“ Bath, May 26, 1754.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ You find me for once somewhat in the case of a fair young virgin—hardly able to withstand your solicitations, they are so warm and engaging; and yet afraid to comply with them, though pleasure must be the certain consequence. But the fair ones, I believe, you have always found at last consenting; and as they are most admirable precedents, so I follow their example.

“ It is true, I ought to be ashamed of not complying without reluctance (in that point indeed the young ladies and I differ); but you know the unhappy cause—some time next week I shall endeavour to wait on you at Aylesbury.

“ I scarce know a man in the world,

whom I would go further to see, or to whom I would sooner dedicate my time and myself. You needed not, for my temptation, in the account you give me of the wonderful verdure of the rich vale of Aylesbury, and the fragrance of your bean-fields in full blossom, to have described Arabia Felix; for I could readily have waited on you in the very deserts.

“ I am, dear sir,
your faithful and obliged humble servant,
“ THOMAS BREWSTER.”

LETTER II.

“ Bath, June 30, 1751.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ THERE is nothing I long for so much, as to be reading a chapter with you at Aylesbury in the old black letter. However hurtful you may find it to the eyes, I am persuaded your learned and pious expositions will render it highly edifying and comfortable to the heart. I will (God willing) fulfil yet my promise, and wait on you before the sum-

mer ends. That I do not set out immediately, I do assure you, is not my fault, but merely my misfortune. Two or three anomalous patients unluckily detain me here; and when they will be pleased to release me, upon my word is more than I can yet tell, or even conjecture. It is a strange thing that people who have the whole year before them to be sick in, can find no other part of it for that purpose, but just the particular time when I should be enjoying the happiness of your company.

“ Whatever may be the weather at Aylesbury, I have no doubt of meeting with gaiety and pleasure when I meet with Mr. Wilkes; and am in the mean time, his obliged friend, and obedient servant,

THOMAS BREWSTER.”

LETTER III.

“ Bath, January 6, 1755.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ THOUGH I am sitting down but now, to acknowledge the favour of your letter, I must nevertheless own I received it in due time; even on Christmas-day in the morning. The contents I hoped would have informed me that you were soon following; but upon perusal, how grievous was the disappointment! almost enough to sadden the most joyous of all seasons.

“ The Royal Society, by taking the steps you mention,* may happily once again favour us with a little common sense; which, among all the strange things they have for some time published, will itself, I should believe, be esteemed the strangest. But the more they reform, the less perhaps they will entertain us; which I wish may not be likewise

* Mr. Wilkes had been lately chosen a Fellow of the Royal Society.

the case of our reforming friend. However, if Mr. *** be, in earnest, so desperately resolved on matrimony, I heartily wish him all the happiness it can afford ; and I hope you are ready with his epithalamium. This indeed is a season whose coldness admonishes us all to think of good warm wives. It makes me do so sometimes among the rest.

“ To the wit and pleasure of this place I am quite a stranger.

“ I am ever yours,

THOMAS BREWSTER.”

LETTER IV.

“ Burton-court, near Leominster, July 29, 1753.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ YOUR letter found me under the apple-trees in Herefordshire, where I have now been these three months, in such a solitude as I am only fit for. The truth is, I am but in a ruinous sort of condition ; nodding, as it were, to my fall : and my tremors, at all

times bad enough, under the observation of company are still worse. For these reasons, though the pleasures of Aylesbury have left a very strong impression, yet I dare not accept your kind invitation to repeat them; but, wishing you all happiness in all places, am, dear sir,

Your most obliged, and
affectionate friend,

THOMAS BREWSTER."

LETTERS OF DR. SMOLLETT TO MR. WILKES.

[In the continuation of Smollett's History of England, is a character of Mr. Wilkes, and a partial account of the proceedings against him, in which the usual accuracy of that historian is carefully preserved. The following letters will shew the sentiments of the writer, before lord Bute undertook the treasury.]

LETTER I.

“ Chelsea, March 16, 1759.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I AM again your petitioner in behalf of that chum of literature, Samuel Johnson. His black servant, whose name is Francis Barber, has been pressed on board the Star frigate, captain Angel; and our lexicographer is in great distress. He says the boy is a sickly lad of a delicate frame, and particularly subject to a malady in his throat, which renders him very unfit for his majesty's service. You

know what matter of animosity the said Johnson has against you;* and I dare say you will desire no other opportunity of resenting it, than that of laying him under an obligation. He was humble enough to desire my assistance on this occasion, though he and I were never cater-cousins; and I gave him to understand that I would make application to my friend Mr. Wilkes, who perhaps, by his interest with Mr. Hay and Mr. Elliot,† might be able to procure the discharge of his lacquey. It would be superfluous to say more on the subject, which I leave to your own consideration; but I cannot let slip this opportunity

* A pleasantry of Mr. Wilkes, on that passage in Johnson's Grammar of the English tongue, prefixed to the Dictionary—"H seldom, perhaps never, begins any but the first syllable." Mr. Wilkes's remark was printed when the Dictionary first appeared, and contained some instances to prove the falsity of Johnson's remark. It began, "The author of this observation must be a man of quick apprehension, and of a most comprehensive genius," &c.

† At that time lords of the admiralty.

of declaring that I am, with the most inviolable esteem and attachment,

Dear sir,

Your affectionate, obliged,

humble servant,

T. SMOLLETT.”*

LETTER II.

“ Chelsea, March 24, 1759.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ *Ecce iterum Crispinus!*—your generosity with respect to Johnson shall be theme of our applause and thanksgiving. I shall be very proud to find myself comprehended in your league offensive and defensive; nay, I consider myself already as a contracting party, and have recourse to the assistance of my allies. It is not, I believe, unknown to you, that admiral Knowles has taken exception at a paragraph in the Critical Review of last

* Mr. Wilkes’s interposition was successful. The black servant was released, and returned to his master.

May, and commenced a prosecution against the printer. Now, whatever termination the trial may have, we shall infallibly be exposed to a considerable expence; and therefore I wish to see the prosecution quashed. Some gentlemen who are my friends, have undertaken to find out and talk with those who are supposed to have influence with the said admiral: may I beg the same favour of you? The trial will come on in the beginning of May; and if the affair cannot be compromised, we intend to kick up a dust and die hard. In a word, if that foolish admiral has any regard to his own character, he will be quiet rather than provoke further the resentment of,

Dear sir,

your very obliged

humble servant,

T. SMOLLETT."

LETTER III.

Chelsea, March 28, 1762.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ MY warmest regard, affection, and attachment, you have long ago secured ; my secrecy you may depend upon. When I presume to differ from you in any point of opinion, I shall always do it with diffidence and deference.

“ I have been ill these three months ; but hope soon to be in a condition to pay my respects to Mr. Wilkes in person. Meanwhile I must beg leave to trouble him with another packet, which he will be so good as to consecrate at his leisure. That he may continue to enjoy his happy flow of spirits, and proceed through life with a full sail of prosperity and reputation, is the wish, the hope, and the confident expectation, of his much obliged, humble servant,

T. SMOLLETT.”

[It is scarcely possible to state a fact that can more strongly shew the total abandonment of every honourable principle, than Dr. Smollett's writing, and printing in his weekly paper called the Briton, the following character of Mr. Wilkes, without the least provocation on his part, only a few months after sending the preceding letter:]

Extract from the Briton, of January 1, 1763.

‘ I would ask if common honesty can reside
‘ in the breast which is consecrated to falsehood
‘ and dissimulation? if one virtue of humanity
‘ can warm the breast that swells with perfidy,
‘ with hatred, and unprovoked revenge? or if
‘ the duties of a good citizen can ever be per-
‘ formed by the hired voluntary instrument of
‘ sedition? No; such a caitiff should not es-
‘ cape unpunished: he does not deserve to en-
‘ joy the protection of the law, far less the pri-
‘ vilege of a native Briton; he does not de-
‘ serve to breath the free air of heaven; but
‘ ought to be exiled from every civilized so-
‘ ciety.’

AYLESBURY ELECTION, 1761.

UPON the death of George the second, the parliament ought to have been dissolved, conformably to the constant usage upon the demise of a king ; but his death being sudden, the *arrangements* for the new elections had not been made. Winter was advancing, it being now the end of October ; and the parliament having only one session more to sit, according to the septennial act, it was resolved by the ministry to permit it to exist till its legal expiration in the ensuing March.

Mr. Wilkes had for some time prepared himself for the approaching election. Every fortnight he invited select parties of his constituents to dinner at his house, whom he entertained with the greatest hospitality ; and he paid the most polite and constant attention to all the inhabitants. Thus his election was tolerably secure ; but not without the usual *gratifications* to those who were accus-

tomed to expect it. Mr. Welbore Ellis, afterwards lord Mendip, one of the vice-treasurers of Ireland, was his colleague; so that he had the government influence added to his own. The Stanhope interest was compromised with that of the Grenvilles; and it was agreed that if the latter would not agitate *the county*, the former would not disturb *Aylesbury*.* Mr. Wilkes and Mr. Ellis were therefore elected without opposition.

Mr. Wilkes frequently remarked to his friends, that he never would advise any gentleman to represent the town he lived at; for his constituents would be a heavy and perpetual incumbrance on his table and his cellar.

There is a fact worth mentioning, although it does not immediately relate to Mr. Wilkes, but generally to the ministerial *arrangement*, at this period, of the new elections. Of this measure the duke of Newcastle had the prin-

* Sir William Stanhope and Mr. Lowndes were re-elected for the county without opposition.

cipal conduct. Lord Bute wished that some of his own particular friends should be brought into parliament ; and he waited on the duke with a list of them. The duke told him, that his application was too late : the *nominations* were all fixed. “ What ! ” exclaimed lord Bute ; “ are *the king’s* boroughs all filled without consulting his majesty ? ” His lordship was highly offended ; and this repulse proved as fatal to the duke of Newcastle, as a similar one had been to Mr. Legge on the Hampshire election in the year 1759. Lord Bute’s exclamation might be well founded ; but it was very imprudent. No doubt, his design was to create a party of his own ; which he afterwards accomplished, and distinguished by the name of *the king’s friends*.

An account of this dismissal of Mr. Legge was written by Dr. Butler, bishop of Hereford. It was printed in quarto, as a pamphlet. It has been since several times printed, in different publications.

The following observations by Mr. Wilkes on the subject, will be new to the generality of the public.

“ Mr. Legge was the first political victim to lord Bute. Mr. Pitt, the dukes of Newcastle and Devonshire, &c. beheld with great indifference his dismission. That able financier foretold, that he was only the *first* sacrifice to the favourite, and that all the rest would follow. He was dismissed without any reason being given to the public, or any charge on his conduct. He observed *that* was the moment of making the opposition to the minion, and that it was necessary for the preservation of all the other whigs ; who, if they did not make the stand then, would attempt it in vain afterwards. His words were prophetic : Mr. Pitt and lord Temple were obliged to resign. The duke of Newcastle was elated at this event ; but a few days dashed all his joy, and a few weeks convinced him of the annihilation of his power. He gave up the treasury, and all his friends went into direct opposition. The duke of Devonshire was soon after dismissed, with still stronger marks of disgust : he was struck off the list of privy-councillors.

“ Perhaps a more remarkable instance is not to be found of the infatuation of statesmen, as well of the little harmony which generally prevails among them. If Mr. Pitt, the dukes of Newcastle and Devonshire, &c. had firmly supported so unexceptionable a minister, and so amiable a man, as Mr. Legge, I am persuaded the favourite must at first have yielded ; and they would have become a firm phalanx against all his further attacks, and all future enemies. But they were secret enemies, and false to each other. The sacrifice of one seemed to forward the views of the rest ; whereas it only hurried them all to the period of their extinction. The political death of Mr. Legge foretold the speedy dissolution of the others.” See also Mr. Wilkes’s letters to Mr. Cotes, vol. ii. p. 96, of the present work.

EMBASSY TO CONSTANTINOPLE, AND GOVERN-
MENT OF CANADA.

THE style of living which Mr. Wilkes found himself obliged to maintain as a member of parliament, considerably exceeded his income ; which increased his pecuniary embarrassments every year. Thus necessity obliged him to think seriously of obtaining some public situation, which might relieve him.

On the death of George the second, in the year 1760, sir James Porter, the British minister at Constantinople, desired to be recalled. When Mr. Wilkes heard of sir James's request, he applied for the appointment as his successor ; that being a situation perfectly suited to his wishes, as it would put him out of the reach of disagreeable applications of all kinds. He found reason to suppose, however, that his success in this matter was prevented by the constant interference

of lord Bute; who, soon after the accession of his present majesty, had been appointed secretary of state, in the room of lord Holderness: the former nobleman being probably displeased at the channel through which Mr. Wilkes's request came—which was, through Mr. Legge, to the duke of Newcastle.

Mr. Wilkes also thought that Mr. Pitt, who was at this time the other secretary of state, shewed him some neglect in the matter: but this suspicion does not seem so well founded as the former. Mr. Pitt and lord Temple recommended for this embassy their brother, the honourable Henry Grenville; who had been governor of Barbadoes since the year 1747, and had lately returned to England. Lord Bute, in this early part of his political career, did not venture to oppose this recommendation; and Mr. Grenville was therefore appointed to the situation, to the great disappointment of Mr. Wilkes.

In the summer of the same year (1761), a treaty of peace being proposed between the

courts of London and Paris, M. Bussey came to London, and Mr. Stanley went to Paris, to conduct the negotiation. If this measure had succeeded, a very handsome provision had been made for Mr. Wilkes. In the projected treaty France agreed that England should keep possession of Canada: the government of that great province immediately caught the attention of Mr. Wilkes, who mentioned it to his friend lord Temple;* and it is certain, that had the negotiation taken a favourable turn, and peace been the consequence, he would have been appointed to this honourable situation, for both lord Temple and Mr. Pitt gave him the most flattering assurances.

Mr. Wilkes says, “ that his ambition was,

* Mr. Wilkes himself admits, “ that he once attended lord Bute’s levee at Whitehall, when his lordship was secretary of state, with an intention of speaking to him; but after two hours attendance, the secretary not coming, Mr. Wilkes went away.” See Political Register, vol. ii. p. 413. This was the only attempt that Mr. Wilkes ever made to gain an audience of lord Bute.

to have gone to Quebec the first governor : to have reconciled the new subjects to the English ; and to have shewn the French the advantages of the mild rule of laws, over that of lawless power and despotism :”* and there is no doubt that he possessed the most excellent qualifications for that important post.

Upon a subsequent vacancy in the embassy to Constantinople, Mr. Wilkes made a second application, similar to his former. In the year 1765 Mr. Henry Grenville was recalled from the Porte : and in the month of July in that year, the marquis of Rockingham and his friends succeeded to the ministry at home ; lord Temple and Mr. Pitt having refused to accept the offers of the court, under the apprehension of the continued influence of lord Bute. As the new ministers had always professed the warmest friendship for Mr. Wilkes, he applied to them through his

* Political Register, second volume, p. 413.

old friend William Fitzherbert, esq. (father of the present lord St. Helen's), at that time member for Derby; a gentleman of the highest universal estimation. But before Mr. Wilkes's application reached Mr. Fitzherbert, the embassy had been given to Robert Colebroke, esq.: who, however, did not go; and three months afterwards John Murray, esq. the resident at Venice, was appointed. This fact is mentioned by Mr. Horne Tooke, in his fifth letter to Mr. Wilkes, in the following words: 'I am half afraid your hopes of 'the present ministry have miscarried; for 'lord St. John, of Bletsoe, not long since 'shewed me a letter from the duke of Graf- 'ton, excusing himself for not appointing his 'lordship to the embassy of Constantinople, 'and mentioning the appointment of Mr. 'Murray:' and Mr. Wilkes himself says, in one of his letters to Mr. Tooke, 'As to the 'Rockingham administration, I do not owe 'a pardon to them, although I warmly so- 'licited it during the whole time of their 'power. Soon after they came into employ-

‘ment, I wished to have gone in a public
‘character to Constantinople.’

Mr. Wilkes further says, in his letter from Paris to Mr. Cotes, dated the 20th of January, 1764,* ‘If they’ (the ministry) ‘would send me ambassador to Constantinople, it is all I should wish.’ In a letter to the same gentleman from Geneva, dated Aug. 18, 1765, are these words: ‘If I am to give my opinion, Constantinople is by far the most eligible.’ In a letter from Paris, dated October 13, 1765, he says: ‘I am still in the same idea as to Constantinople.’ And in a letter from Paris, dated July 20, 1766, ‘I wished to have gone to Constantinople. I would go to Quebec, and perhaps I might be found in no mean way useful there.’

* Vol. ii, p. 53, of the present work.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE PAPERS RELATIVE TO
THE RUPTURE WITH SPAIN.

WHEN Mr. Pitt and lord Temple found themselves obliged to retire from the government (which was in October, 1761) on account of lord Bute over-ruling their advice with regard to Spain, Mr. Wilkes began to direct his attention to politics, and to the measures of the new ministry. Very little penetration was requisite to discover the views and wishes of lord Bute: his ambition to take the lead in all public councils, and to direct all the affairs of the state, was obvious. This conduct gave an alarm to all ranks of the people; who had seen and felt the happy effects of an unexampled union of all the talents, energy, and spirit of the nation, exerted in support of the public interest: such an alarm as could not fail to cast a gloom on every generous mind; and to inspire a dread that unanimity, dignity, and Mr. Pitt, were now no more to benefit the public.

When parliament met, which was early in November, 1761, the late resignations were the subject of much debate. An altercation took place in the house of lords, between lord Temple and lord Bute, which exasperated Mr. Wilkes against lord Bute very highly. This affair was stated in the Monitor of May 29th, 1767. As that paper is now in few hands, it may be proper to transcribe the passage.

“ Lord Temple, after recommending unanimity in the strongest terms, said, he would make but one observation upon all that had been advanced concerning the Family Compact, viz. that it was allowed to have been signed in August, ratified in the first week in September, and the written advice* was given and dated on the 18th of the same month. Upon which, lord Bute suddenly started up, and asserted, in a very insolent and

* To recall lord Bristol, the English ambassador at Madrid.

peevish manner, ‘ That there was *no* intelligence of such a fact, so constituted, at that time.’ To this lord Temple replied, ‘ That there *was* intelligence of the highest moment, relative to those matters, at that time ; that he was not at liberty to publish it, but would *refresh* his lordship’s memory in private ;’ which he accordingly did, below the bar. But lord Bute had not the candour to acknowledge his conviction in the house ; which a generous mind would not have neglected.”*

In the early part of the month of January, 1762, the new ministry found it necessary to publish that declaration of war against Spain, which Mr. Pitt and lord Temple had recommended in the preceding month of September ; and towards the end of January they laid before the two houses of parliament the papers relative to the rupture with Spain, which were ordered to be printed.

* See Mr. Wilkes’s letter to Mr. Almon, dated Paris, August 28, 1767. (Vol. iii. p. 168, of the present work.)

Mr. Wilkes immediately wrote a very able and very judicious examination of these documents; which he entitled, ‘Observations on the Papers relative to the Rupture with Spain.’ This tract was exceedingly well received, and highly approved. It was a very masterly vindication of Mr. Pitt and lord Temple; and with equal justice exposed the folly, cowardice, and imbecility of the ministry, in losing the best opportunity that had ever occurred, of reducing the power of Spain so far as never to become formidable to this nation. This was his *first* political essay; and it reflected as much honour on his political, as on his literary talents.

The subject of this pamphlet being temporary, and unconnected with any circumstances of Mr. Wilkes’s life, it is not necessary to make any extracts from it here. All the historical parts may be found in the registers and journals of the period.

A few days after its publication, a report was circulated, that it was written by Dr. Douglas; author of several pamphlets against

Archibald Bower, and now bishop of Salisbury and chancellor of the garter. This report occasioned Dr. Douglas to send the following letter to Mr. Wilkes.

“ Half-Moon-street, Piccadilly, April 1, 1762.

“ SIR,

“ You will excuse the trouble I give you, because it is on an affair of infinite concern to my character, and I think you have it in your power to do me justice. A report has been set about, that I am the author of the Observations on the Spanish Papers; which, if it gains credit, will be as prejudicial to my interest, as it is absolutely unsupported by truth. You may please to remember you told me in the Park, the very day after the pamphlet appeared, that you heard I had writ it. It is become necessary for me, by the advice of the most respectable friends, to trace this groundless story to the fountain-head: and therefore I apply to you, begging you would recollect who told you I was the author; that so I may be able effectually to stop the

progress of a report, which, if at first propagated only wantonly, will, I fear, if not traced to its source, in the end have the same bad effects as if it had come from the most determined malice.

I am, sir,
your most obedient and
most humble servant,
JOHN DOUGLAS."

Mr. Wilkes's Answer.

" Winchester, April 6, 1762.

" SIR,

" I HAD the honour of your letter at Basingstoke, in my march to this place. When I was last in the foolish circle at the Smyrna, the Observations on the Spanish Papers were talked of: and as you know the sages there pretend to infinite sagacity, they were generally given to you; though a few ascribed them to Mauduit, the author of the famous Considerations.* I am entirely satisfied with

* On the German war.

your authentic assurances on this subject, and on every occasion will contradict so groundless a report.

“ There is not a man in this country who more honours your superior literary abilities than I do ; or more warmly wishes, for the dignity of our church, to see them rewarded in an eminent and distinguished manner.

“ I shall be strenuous in contradicting the report : for, undoubtedly, the author of the Observations has no chance of favour from any of the present powers ; and if he is the unlucky Mauduit, he has overthrown all the merit he might with some derive from the Considerations. I hope that your friends will exert themselves with the same zeal on this occasion as I assure you I shall ; for I am, with real regard,

Sir,

your very humble servant,

JOHN WILKES.”

FALL OF MORTIMER.

MR. WILKES's *second* political essay, was an ironical Dedication to the earl of Bute, of Ben Jonson's historical play, entitled The Fall of Mortimer. It was published at the beginning of the year 1763. This dedication was greatly admired, for its elegance and severity : and Mr. Wilkes frequently said to his friends, that he esteemed it superior to any of his other compositions.

The following copy of this article is printed, according to Mr. Wilkes's desire (expressed in his letters to the editor, dated on the 28th of August and the 15th of October *), from the third volume of the *North Briton* ; and includes his last corrections and additions.

“ To the right honourable JOHN, earl of BUTE ; chancellor of the university of Aberdeen in Scotland, first commissioner of the treasury in England, one of the

* See Vol. iii, p. 168 and 170.

sixteen representatives of the peers of Scotland, one of his majesty's most honourable privy council, and knight of the most noble English order of the garter.

“ MY LORD,

“ MANY and various motives have concurred to give a peculiar propriety to the fond wish I had formed, of making this humble offering at the shrine of Bute. I have felt an honest indignation at all the invidious, unjust, and odious applications of Roger Mortimer. I absolutely disclaim the most distant allusion; and I purposely dedicate this play to your lordship, because history does not furnish a more striking contrast than there is between the two ministers in the reigns of Edward the third and George the third. I shall trace this through a variety of the most interesting particulars; secure of the satisfaction your lordship will find by accompanying me in so pleasing a pursuit.

“ Edward the third was held in the most absolute slavery by his mother and her mi-

nister. The first nobles of England were excluded from the king's councils, and the minion disposed of all places of profit and trust. The king's uncles did not retain the shadow of power and authority. They were treated with insult ; and the whole royal family became not only depressed, but forced to depend on the caprice of an insolent favourite. The young king had been victorious over the Scots ; then a fierce, savage, and perfidious people : in *that* reign our cruel enemies ; happily, in *this* our dearest friends. On every favourable opportunity, either by the distractions in the public councils of this kingdom during a minority, or by the absence of the national troops, they had ravaged England with fire and sword. Edward might have compelled them to accept of any terms, so glorious and decisive was the success of his arms : but Roger Mortimer, from personal motives of power and ambition, hastily concluded an ignominious peace ; by which he sacrificed the triumphs of a prosperous war, and the justest claims of conquest.

“ It is with the highest rapture, my lord, I now look back to that disgraceful æra, because I feel the striking contrast it makes with the halcyon days of George the Third.— This excellent prince is held in no kind of captivity. All his nobles have free access to him. The throne is not now besieged. Court favour, not now confined to one partial stream, flows in a variety of different channels, enriching this whole country. There is now the most perfect union among all the branches of the royal family. No court minister now finds it necessary, for the preservation of his own omnipotence, by the vilest insinuations to divide either the royal or any noble families. The king’s uncle is now treated with that marked distinction which his merit is entitled to both from the nation and the throne; that throne established by his valour in extinguishing a foul rebellion, which burst upon us from its *native north*, and almost overspread the land. Our sovereign is conscious that he owes more to our *great deliverer* than any other prince in Europe owes to any

subject ; and he sets a noble example of gratitude to princes,

‘ Que les rois, ces illustres ingrats,
Sont assez malheureux pour ne connoître pas.’

VOLTAIRE.

No favourite now has trampled upon the most respectable of the English nobility, and driven them from their sovereign’s counsils. No discord now rages in the kingdom ; but every tongue blesses the minister who has by so many ways endeared himself no less to the nobility than to the whole body of the people.

‘ Primores populi arripuit, populumque tributim.’

“ To complete the contrast, we have now an advantageous, a glorious peace ; fully adequate to all the successes, to all the glories, of the war.

“ The present internal policy of this kingdom, my lord, is equally to be admired. Our gracious sovereign maturely examines all matters of national importance ; and no unfair or partial representation of any business, or of any of his subjects, is suffered to be made to

him, nor can any character be assassinated in the dark by an unconstitutional prime-minister. He regularly, by your advice, attends every private council of real moment, and nothing is there submitted to the arbitrary decision of one man. This happy state of things we owe to your lordship's unexampled care of his majesty's youth. The important promise you made us—that we should frequently see our sovereign, like his predecessor William the Third, presiding in person at the British treasury—has been fulfilled: to the advantage and glory of these times; and to the perfecting of that scheme of economy so earnestly recommended from the throne, and so ably carried into execution by yourself and *your* chancellor of the exchequer,* as well as so minutely by the lord-steward of

* “ Sir Francis Dashwood, afterwards lord Le Despenser; who, from puzzling all his life at tavern bills, was called by lord Bute to administer the finances of a kingdom above one hundred millions in debt, and styled by him (in the royal manner) *my chancellor.*”

the household.* *Your* whole council of state, too, is composed of men of the first abilities: the duke of Bedford; the earls of Halifax, Egremont, and Gower; the lords Henley, Mansfield, and Ligonier; Mr. George Grenville, and Mr. Fox. The business of this great empire is not, however, trusted to them: the most arduous and complicated parts are not only digested and prepared, but finally revised and settled, by Gilbert Elliot and Alexander Wedderburn, esquires, sir Henry Erskine baronet, and the Home.†

* “Earl Talbot; who thought a civil list of 800,000l. a-year insufficient to keep up the hospitality of a private nobleman’s kitchen, in the king of England’s palace.” [This nobleman is mentioned at some length in pages 28 and following of vol. iii.]

† “The reverend John Home, esquire; first a preacher among the Scottish presbyterians, then a playwright. This preacher, like the famous Thresher the blind cobler and others, was at the beginning looked upon as a prodigy of genius and learning; merely from being thought to have, at an early age, produced one tolerable piece. He went on, and it was soon seen how mean and contemptible his talents were. He sunk into

“ Another reason why I choose your lordship for the subject of this dedication, is, that you are said, *by former dedicators*, to cultivate with success the polite arts. How sparing and penurious is this praise! such literary economy is really odious. They ought to have gone further, and to have shewn how liberally you are pleased to reward all men of genius. Malloch* and the Home have been

obscurity; and his fame, like the torrent he speaks of in Douglas,

‘ Infused silence with a *silly* sound.’

(VAR. LECT. *silly.*)”

* “ David Malloch, author of many forgotten poems and plays, was formerly usher to a school in Scotland. On his arrival from the north, he became a great declaimer at the London coffee-houses against the Christian religion. Old surly Dennis was highly offended at his conduct, and always called him Moloch. He then changed his name to Mallet, and soon after published An Epistle to Mr. Pope on Verbal Criticism. Theobald was attacked in it, and soon revenged himself in the new edition of Shakspeare: ‘ An anonymous writer has, like a Scotch pedlar in wit, unbraced his pack on the sub-

nobly provided for. Let Churchill, or Armstrong, write like them,—your lordship's clas-

‘ject. I may fairly say of this author, as Falstaff does of Poins: “Hang him, baboon ! his wit is as thick as Tewksbury mustard; there is no more conceit in him than a *mallet*.” Preface, p. 52, edition of 1733.

“ This Malloch had the happiness of a wife, who had *faith* enough. She *believed* that her husband was the greatest poet and wit of the age. Sometimes she would seize and kiss his hand with rapture ; and, if the looks of a friend expressed any surprise, would apologize, that ‘it was the dear hand that wrote those divine poems.’ She once lamented to a lady, how much the reputation of her husband suffered by his name being so frequently confounded with that of Dr. Smollett. The lady answered, ‘Madam, there is a short remedy : let your husband keep to *his own name*.’

“ The same man published lord Bolingbroke’s posthumous works, for which a presentment was made by the grand jury of Middlesex. Johnson said, that lord Bolingbroke had charged a blunderbuss with all manner of combustibles against the human race ; and that he dared not let it off himself, but had hired a rascal to pull the trigger.

“ In the octavo abridgment of Johnson’s Dictionary, is an article of ‘*Alias*, for otherwise ; as *Mallet*, otherwise ‘*Malloch*.’ ”

sical taste will relish their works, and patronize the authors. You, my lord, are said to be not only a patron, but a judge; and Malloch adds, that he wishes, for the honour of our country, that this praise were not almost exclusively your own. I wish too, for the honour of *my* country, and to preserve your lordship from the contagion of a malignant envy, that you would not again give permission to a Scottish scribbler to sacrifice almost the whole body of *our* nobility to his itch of panegyric on you, of pay from you; and I submit, whether a future inconvenience may not result from so remarkable an instance how certain and speedy the way to obtain the last is, by means of the first.

“ Almost all the sciences, my lord, have at length made so great a progress in England, that we are become the objects of jealousy to the rest of Europe; but under your auspices Botany and Tragedy have now reached the utmost height of perfection. Not only the system of power, but the vegetable system likewise, has been completed, by the joint labours of your lordship and the great doctor Hill.

Tragedy, under Malloch and the Home, has with us rivalled the Greek model, and united the different merits of the great moderns. The fire of Shakspeare, and the correctness of Racine, have met in your two countrymen. One other exotic, too, I must not forget: Arthur Murphy, gent. He has the additional merit of acting, no less than of writing, so as to touch in the most exquisite manner all the fine feelings of the human frame. I have scarcely ever felt myself more forcibly affected than by this excellent but poor neglected player; except a few years ago at the duchess of Queensbury's, where your lordship so frequently exhibited. In one part, which was remarkably humane and amiable,* you were so great, that the general exclamation was, that here you did not *act!* In another part you were no less perfect. I mean in the famous scene of Hamlet, where you pour fatal poison into the ear of a good unsuspecting king.

* "Lord Bute was fond of acting Lothario. It was the expression of Frederic prince of Wales, echoed by the public, 'Here Bute does not *act.*' "

If the great names of Murphy and Bute, as players, *pensantur eadēm trutinā*, it is no flattery to say that you, my lord, were not only superior, but even unrivalled by him, as well as by all who have ever appeared on the great stage of the world. As a writer I take Mr. Murphy rather to excel you, except in points of *orthography* ;* but as an actor he can form no pretension to even an equality. Nature indeed, in her utmost simplicity, we admire in Mr. Murphy ; but art, art, characterises your lordship.

“ This too gives your lordship a claim to the dedication of this *play*. You are perfect in every thing respecting the powers of *acting*. Your whole mind has been formed to it. All your faculties have been directed to this important object. While Mr. Pitt, lord Temple, and others your cotemporaries, unmindful of such great acquirements, were only preparing themselves for the national business of parliament, and beginning to take a distin-

* This allusion is explained below, in pages 83, 84.

guished part in that single sphere,—you, after a seven years *service* in the house of peers, had become perfect in your various parts, and condescended to tread many a private stage in the high buskins of pompous sonorous tragedy—with what superior success I record with pleasure. Mr. Pitt and his noble brother are now both in a private station. You hold the first office of this kingdom, and enjoy almost exclusively the smiles of your sovereign. They have only the empty applause of their country. Even this, too, they share with others: a duke of Newcastle and Devonshire, a marquis of Rockingham, an earl of Hardwicke; and the two spirited young nobles who stand so high in fame and virtue, whom England glories that she can call her own, the dukes of Grafton and Portland. These distinguished characters must ever be respected by your lordship for their ardent love of our sovereign and of liberty; as well as honoured by *this* nation as the declared, determined, and combined enemies, of despotic, insolent, contemptible favouritism.

“ As Tragedy and Botany have thus reared

their heads, give me leave to recommend to your lordship one important point respecting the sciences and the belles.lettres which still remains unsettled : I mean Orthography. The French Academy has fixed it for their nation; and yet a bold modern, Voltaire, has dared to deviate from their rules. He endeavours to establish a new orthography, still nearer approaching to the pronunciation. With a polite nobleman this must bear the palm, if not of correctness, yet of grace and elegance. Some specimens of this kind in our own tongue which your lordship has seen, have much amused me; although the deviations from the vulgar mode might not, perhaps, be supported with the learned arguments of that amazing French genius. Indeed, my lord, the *letters* to which I allude are so curious, that I wish for a fac-simile of them, as we have of one famous genuine letter of your countryman Archibald Bower.* They would,

* “Vide Dr. John Douglas’s several pamphlets relative to Bower’s Correspondence with the Jesuits.”

I am persuaded, excel all the curious manuscripts in your university of Aberdeen, or among the immense collection of learned books of your late valuable purchase in the Argyll library. May I not therefore hope, that as the definitive treaty is now signed, your lordship's labours will be directed to this important point; and that we may expect to see a complete orthographical dictionary, to determine the knotty point of *Britain* for *Briton*, which has of late puzzled that great writer the great Briton himself, notwithstanding the excellence of his Scottish education?* Ease and elegance will, I am persuaded, still attend your lordship, as inseparably as they ever have done; nor will you

* “These endearing words, ‘Born and educated in this country, I glory in the name of Britain,’ were permitted to be seen in the above royal orthography, of *Britain* for *Briton*. Some pretended to give an Icon Basiliké of his sacred majesty king George the third from that single word. The political writer the Briton, in several passages followed the royal orthography.” [See vol. iii. pages 130 to 132, of the present work.]

in this case be in danger of being forsaken by them, although Benedict (or, if you please, in your botanical phrase, *Carduus Benedictus*) says, now he is turned *orthographer*, ‘ his words are a very fantastical banquet, just like so many strange dishes.’

“ I should have added, my lord, that the play of which I now make the humble offering, is a Tragedy—the most grave and moral of all poems. With a happy propriety, therefore, it comes inscribed to your lordship; the most grave, the most moral, of all men. A witty comedy I would never have offered to your lordship, nor indeed to any of your countrymen. Wit is an *ignis-fatuus*, which bewilders and leads astray. It is the primrose path which conducts to folly. Your lordship has never deviated into it. You have marched on with solemn dignity, keeping ever the tragic step; and, on the greatest occasions, SO known, SO honoured,—*at the house of lords* :*

* “ ‘ Grac’d as thou art with all the *power of words*;
So known, so honour’d, at the house of lords.’

POPE.

These two lines on lord Mansfield are rather bathos and

exhibiting to the world what you learned on the stage, the most pompous diction with the boldest theatrical swell—infinitely superior to all the light airs of wit and humour. The easy sock of laughing Comedy you never condescended to wear.

“ I have only one thing more to urge to your lordship—the play is quite imperfect. Your lordship loves the stage: so does Mr. Murphy. Let me entreat your lordship to assist your friend in perfecting the weak scenes of this tragedy; and, from the crude labours of Ben Jonson and others, to give us a *complete* play. *It is the warmest wish of my heart, that the EARL OF BUTE may speedily COMPLETE the story of ROGER MORTIMER.* I hope that your lordship will graciously condescend to undertake this arduous task, for which talents like yours are peculiarly adapted.

burlesque than panegyric; but Mr. Wilkes seriously and fatally experienced his lordship’s *power of words*, in the *alteration of the records.*” [See vol. ii. page 72, of the present work; &c.]

A variety of anecdotes in real life will supersede the least necessity of poetical fiction. To you every thing will be easy. The fifth act of this play will find those great talents still in full vigour, even after you have run so wonderful a career. If more important concerns, either of business or amusement, engage you too much, I beg, my lord, that you will please royally to *command* Mr. Murphy, as Mr. Macpherson says you *commanded* him to publish the prose-poems of Fingal and Temora. Such a work will immortalize your glory in the literary, as the peace of Paris will in the political, world; and I venture to prophesy, that when the name of Roger Mortimer shall be mentioned, that of Bute will follow, to the latest times. *

* " This idea does not seem to be disagreeable to the noble lord, if the following passage of a late journal be true :—

" " We hear with pleasure of the progress of the polite arts even to *ultima Thule*. We are informed from the north of Scotland, that at Mountstuart, in the Isle

“ Give me leave, my lord, to offer my thanks, as an *Englishman*, for your public conduct. At your accession to power, you found us a distracted disunited nation. The late abandoned *minister of the people* had wickedly extended every art of corruption through all ranks of men, the senate not excepted : I speak of the late *venal parliament*. You, my lord, have made us an united and a happy nation. ‘ Corruption started like a guilty thing’ upon your summons of Mr. Fox ; nor have I since heard of a single instance of undue,

‘ of Bute, is lately finished a superb cenotaph, of the
‘ finest statuary marble. The design is best explained in
‘ the inscription :

‘ Felici Genio
et
Æternæ Famæ
ROGERI MORTIMER,
Comitis de March,
Quòd monstravit viam ;
Hoc qualemcumque grati animi et honoris monumentum
Posuit
Johannes Stuart,
COMES DE BUTE.”

unconstitutional influence, exerted in the senate: I now speak of the *present virtuous* parliament. Your lordship, too, has received from every foreign court the most flattering testimonies of an unbounded confidence in your veracity and good faith, equal to their just sense of your transcendent abilities.

“ I beg pardon, my lord, for having so long detained the patriot minister of the patriot king from the great scenes of foreign business, or the rooting out corruption at home, or the innocent employments of his leisure hours. I hope Dr. Hill and the Home will forgive me; and that the great triumvirate, having at length completed a glorious and permanent peace, may in learned ease, under the shade of their own olive, soon enjoy the full sweets of their own philosophy: for, as Candide observes, *cela est bien dit, mais il faut cultiver notre jardin.* In your softer, more envied, hours of retirement, I wish you, my lord, the most exquisite pleasures under the shade of the Cyprian myrtle: your *patriot* moments will be passed under the Scottish fir.

“ I will no longer intrude upon your lordship. The Cocoa-tree and your countrymen may be impatient to settle with you the army and the finances of *this* kingdom. I have only to add my congratulations on the peculiar fame you have acquired, so adequate to the wonderful acts of your administration. You are in full possession of that fame at the head of tories and Scotsmen ; but alas ! my lord, the history of mankind shews how fantastic, as well as transitory, is fame. What an excellent moral of humility are we taught by this ! It is mortifying to reflect that the meanest have their day, as well as the most eminent and illustrious. Although Mr. Pitt is still at the head of *whigs* and *Englishmen*, he too will experience that

The greatest can but blaze and pass away.

POPE.

“ I am, my lord,
with a zeal and respect equal to your virtues,
your lordship’s
very humble servant.”

THE HISTORY OF THE NORTH BRITON.

WHEN lord Bute advanced himself to the head of the treasury (May 29, 1762), he immediately engaged a number of literary characters to vindicate his measures. If these writers had confined themselves to the mere task of defence, no notice would have been taken of them; but, on the contrary, they seemed to have been hired also for the express purpose of calumniating the ministers of the late king. On the very day of lord Bute's entering into office, was published the first number of the weekly political paper called "*The Briton*," written by Dr. Smollett. Nothing could betray more evidently his lordship's conscious weakness and inability, than the circumstance of publishing this paper before he had performed a single act of government. He might have foreseen that an avowed and scurrilous ministerial paper must excite opponents; and this was in fact the case. Mr. Wilkes was highly incensed at

seeing his friends so vilely and bitterly traduced by lord Bute's mercenaries; and immediately resolved to counteract the effects of this by instituting another paper, which he called "The North Briton." The wit and severity of the latter instantly gave it a very extensive circulation; and it was followed by another publication in support of lord Bute, more scurrilous than the first. This last was called the Auditor; and was written by Mr. Arthur Murphy, upon whom Mr. Wilkes is so severe in the foregoing Dedication of Mortimer: * but neither it nor the Briton was approved by the public. They were dull and vulgar, and in a few months ceased.

As the North Briton had commenced with lord Bute's administration, and his lordship was avowedly the principal object of attack, its publication should have been discontinued when that nobleman quitted the treasury, the purpose being thus apparently obtained. It must accordingly be observed, that the last number but one of the North Briton

* Pages 80, 81, 86, 87, above.

(N^o 44) was published on the 2nd of April; and the celebrated number “45” was not published till the 23d of that month. During this interval Mr. Wilkes carried his daughter to Paris, to finish her education; and upon this occasion it is not improbable that the publication of the *North Briton* would have been still further suspended, had not a singular accident (which is but little known) caused its early revival.

On lord Bute’s resignation, which took place on the 8th of April, 1763, Mr. Grenville was appointed his successor; and lord Sandwich took the vacancy thus occasioned at the admiralty. Other alterations were made, and the necessary parliamentary writs were issued for new elections. The writ, however, for supplying Mr. Grenville’s seat, was not moved for till the 19th*, the day on which the parliament was prorogued, although he had been appointed immediately on lord Bute’s resigning. This delay arose from his being obliged to apply to his bro-

* Commons’ Journals, vol. xxix. p. 646.

ther, earl Temple, for permission to be re-elected for the town of Buckingham; a request which was peculiarly distressing to himself, because at this time there subsisted the most bitter animosity between the brothers. This application was made on the 18th; and Mr. Charles Lloyd, Mr. Grenville's private secretary, carried the letter, in which was enclosed a copy of the king's speech (perhaps as a compliment) to be delivered from the throne the next day. Mr. Pitt, afterwards earl of Chatham, was at his lordship's house in Pall-Mall when this message arrived; and he added his personal entreaty that lord Temple would consent to his brother's re-election, with which his lordship complied. But it does not seem probable that his consent would have been given without Mr. Pitt's intercession; for in the "Remarks on the Letters which passed between Mr. Allen, of Bath, and Mr. Pitt," which lord Temple himself dictated, there is a very strong insinuation to that effect.

Lord Temple and Mr. Pitt were much

displeased on reading the king's speech, which they had thus received. Mr. Pitt spoke with warmth and indignation on the passage respecting the king of Prussia; and lord Temple adopted his sentiments. At this instant, Mr. Wilkes happened to call upon his lordship; having just returned from Paris. Mr. Wilkes agreed in sentiment concerning the speech; and when he returned home he wrote a sketch of the conversation which passed on the subject while he was present. From this sketch, and some additions of his own, he wrote this celebrated paper, the forty-fifth Number, which was published on Saturday the 23d of April, 1763.

THE GENERAL WARRANT.

THE ministry immediately laid this Number (45) before the attorney and solicitor general, at that time Mr. Charles Yorke and sir Fletcher Norton, for their opinions upon it. They answered “that in their opinion the paper was an infamous and seditious libel ; tending to inflame the minds, and alienate the affections of the people from his majesty, and excite them to traitorous insurrections against his government.” The ministry were highly gratified by this ; for, under the pretence of vindicating the throne, they had now an opportunity to revenge their own private injuries. They resolved to prosecute, with the utmost severity, the authors, printers, and publishers of this offensive paper. The secretary of state for the home department (lord Halifax) issued a general warrant, without any information upon oath, and in which only the publisher was mentioned by *name*, to seize “ the authors,

printers, and publishers," with their papers, and bring them before his lordship.*

The first person seized by the authority of this warrant was Mr. Dryden Leach; printer, in Crane-court, Fleet-street. The messengers entered his house in the night; and took him out of bed from his wife, while his

* The following is a copy of the warrant.

“ **GEORGE** Montagu Dunk, earl of Halifax, vis-
L. S. count Sunbury, and baron Halifax; one of the
lords of his majesty’s most honourable privy
council, lieutenant-general of his majesty’s forces, and
principal secretary of state. These are in his majesty’s
name to authorize and require you (taking a constable
to your assistance) to make strict and diligent search for
the authors, printers, and publishers, of a seditious and
treasonable paper intitled ‘the North Briton, number
xlv. Saturday April 23, 1763, printed by G. Kearsley
in Ludgate-street,’ and them or any of them having
found, to apprehend and seize, together with their papers,
and to bring in safe custody before me, to be examined
concerning the premises, and further dealt with accord-
ing to law. And in due execution thereof all mayors,
sheriffs, justices of the peace, constables, and all other
his majesty’s officers civil and military, and loving sub-
jects whom it may concern, are to be aiding and assist-
ing to you as there shall be occasion. And for so doing

child lay dangerously ill in the room. They likewise seized all his papers, and apprehended even his journeymen and servants. Though all this was done, Mr. Leach in fact had no concern, immediate or remote, with either the printing or publishing of the North Briton: and he was confined several days after his innocence was perfectly known. Somebody had told Carrington the messenger, that Mr. Wilkes had been seen going into Leach's house; and this was all the foundation which they had for taking the latter gentleman and all his workmen, &c. into custody.

On the same morning (which was the 29th of April) the same messengers, acting under the *same* warrant, apprehended Mr. Kearsley,

this shall be your warrant. Given at St. James's the twenty-sixth day of April, in the third year of his majesty's reign.

“ DUNK HALIFAX.”

“ To Nathan Carrington, John Money, James Watson, and Robert Blackmore, four of his majesty's messengers in ordinary.”

who was the real publisher of the *North Briton*; together with all his servants, his papers and accompt-books. They were taken to the secretary of state's office; and Mr. Kearsley was examined before lord Halifax, and lord Egremont (the other secretary of state), but not upon oath. He gave them all the information he possessed: that Mr. Richard Balfé, in the Old Bailey, was the printer of the *North Briton*; that Mr. Wilkes gave orders for the printing; that Mr. Churchill (the poet) received the profits arising from the sale; of the *author*, he could say nothing.

The very *same* general warrant was now issued a *third* time; for taking Mr. Balfé, and all his workmen and his papers. Mr. Balfé was the forty-eighth person attached by this precept. At his examination he was reserved, and said very little: he was not upon oath. Mr. Philip Carteret Webb (at that time solicitor to the treasury) and Mr. Lovell Stanhope (law-clerk to the secretary of state), who were both present, declar-

ing that the publisher's evidence was sufficient to justify any proceeding against *Mr. Wilkes* as the *author* of the paper,—upon this opinion the warrant was sent out a *fourth* time. By the return before made, this *famous* warrant had already done more than its duty, and therefore it was clearly *functus officio*. Every justice of peace knows, that to apprehend *Mr. Wilkes*, *another* warrant should have been issued: and it is certain, that lord Halifax thought this measure necessary, and intended to put *Mr. Wilkes*'s name in such new warrant; but *Mr. Webb* said that another warrant was not at all necessary,—and as to the naming of *Mr. Wilkes*, he added with an emphasis, *it was better not*.

Lord Egremont gave the messengers verbal orders to enter *Mr. Wilkes*'s house even at midnight; and to seize his person, together with all his papers. The men, however, were not so intemperate: they waited till morning before they executed their orders; and even then they did not choose to enter the house by violence, but waited some time in the street. *Mr. Wilkes* went out of

his house very early in the morning, to make inquiry concerning Kearsley and Balfe; and when he returned, the messenger Watson arrested him at his own door. Mr. Wilkes demanded to see the warrant; and not finding in it his name, nor any description of his person,—nor even one word that could allude *personally* to him,—he declared that he would not yield obedience to so illegal a precept. When the door was opened, the other messengers instantly entered the house.

THE EVASION OF THE HABEAS-CORPUS; SEIZURE OF PAPERS; AND DISCHARGE BY THE COURT OF COMMON-PLEAS.

A FEW minutes after the entrance of the messengers, the editor of this work happened to call on Mr. Wilkes; not from any knowledge of the circumstance, but because he had for some time been in the habit of occasionally visiting that gentleman. On his being admitted into the parlour, where Mr. Wilkes

and the messengers were in conversation, Mr. Wilkes took him to the other end of the room : and there informed him, in a low tone of voice, that the men were the king's messengers, who had arrested him by a warrant in which he was not named ; and begged of him to step immediately to lord Temple, and acquaint his lordship of the affair. The messengers, not knowing that the editor was one of Mr. Wilkes's intimate friends, permitted him quietly to leave the house ; for which they were afterwards severely reprimanded.

As soon as lord Temple received the information, he did not hesitate an instant in pursuing the proper measures. He desired the editor to go, with all possible dispatch, to Mr. Arthur Beardmore, his lordship's attorney in the city, and request him to apply immediately to the court of common-pleas, for a writ of habeas-corpus to bring Mr. Wilkes before the court. Mr. Churchill called on Mr. Wilkes a very short time after the editor had left the house ; but his fears for his own personal safety would not permit him to stay a moment.

Mr. Beardmore obeyed his instructions with alacrity. In the mean time the messengers forced Mr. Wilkes into a chair, and carried him to lord Halifax's house,—who then resided at the corner of Great George-street, next the park. Lord Egremont, the other secretary of state, came directly afterwards.

All the particulars of his apprehension, and of the conversation at lord Halifax's, have been stated by Mr. Wilkes, in his second Letter to the Duke of Grafton, which is printed in another part of this work;* it is therefore unnecessary to enter into further detail here.

John Walsh, esq. at that time member for Worcester; and Richard Hopkins, of Oving, Bucks, esq., afterwards member for Dartmouth; happened to be in the court of common-pleas when the writ of habeas-corpus was applied for and granted. They immediately went to lord Halifax's, and desired to see Mr. Wilkes; which, after some hesitation, they were allowed to do, but only in the presence of Mr. Philip Carte-

* Vol. iii. pages 197 to 208.

ret Webb and Mr. Lovell Stanhope. Both the former gentlemen then acquainted Mr. Wilkes, in the hearing of the two latter, that a writ of habeas-corpus was issued by the court of common-pleas, to bring him before the court.*

* Of this important fact both Mr. Walsh and Mr. Hopkins made affidavit.

The following is a copy of the writ of habeas-corpus.

“ In the court of common-pleas. George the third, by the grace of God, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, king, defender of the faith, and so forth, to Robert Blackmore and James Watson, greeting. We command ye, and each of ye, that ye have the body of John Wilkes, esq. by whatsoever name, or addition of name, he may be named or charged, under your custody taken and detained, as it is said; together with the day and cause of the taking and detaining the said John Wilkes; before the justices of the court of common-bench, at Westminster, in the great hall of pleas, there immediately after the receipt of this our writ: to do and receive all those things which the same court shall then and there consider of in this particular. Witness sir Charles Pratt, knight, at Westminster, the thirtieth day of April, in the third year of our reign.

“ By the court,

Endorsed, “BEARDMORE (by STANNYNOUGHT).
“ H. GOULD.”

This information, however interesting, and though given by gentlemen of the first respectability, was treated with the utmost contempt: but the secretaries of state,

Copy of the warrant to the messengers.

Charles earl of Egremont and George Dunk earl of Halifax, lords of his majesty's most honourable privy council, and principal secretaries of state, &c.

These are, in his majesty's name to authorize and require you to deliver, into the custody of the constable of the tower of London, the body of John Wilkes, esq. for which this shall be your warrant. Given under our hands and seals this thirtieth day of April, 1763.

EGREMONT (L. S.)

DUNK HALIFAX (L.S.)

To George Collins and Thomas Ardran, two of his majesty's messengers in ordinary.

Copy of the warrant of commitment.

Charles earl of Egremont, and George Dunk earl of Halifax, lords of his majesty's most honourable privy council, and principal secretaries of state.

These are in his majesty's name to authorize and require you to receive into your custody the body of John Wilkes, esq. herewith sent you, for being the author and publisher of a most infamous and seditious libel, intitled

after some consultation, thought proper, in order to *evade* the writ of habeas-corpus, to *shift* the custody of Mr. Wilkes from the messengers who had taken him, into the hands of *other* messengers; and in this manner was the custody of Mr. Wilkes

the North Briton, number 45, tending to inflame the minds and alienate the affections of the people from his majesty, and excite them to traitorous insurrections against the government. And to keep safe and close until he shall be delivered by due course of law, and for so doing this shall be your warrant. Given at St. James's the 30th day of April, 1763, in the third year of his majesty's reign.

signed

EGREMONT (L. S.)

DUNK HALIFAX (L. S.)

To the right honourable
John Lord Berkeley, of
Stratton, constable of his
majesty's tower of Lon-
don, or to the lieutenant
of the said tower, or his
deputy.

Major Rainsford, who was lieutenant-governor of the tower, declared that he had *other* orders besides the warrant.

changed no less than *four* times in half a day. First, he was in the hands of Robert Blackmore and James Watson, who had apprehended him under the general warrant ; he was carried by them to the secretary of state's office, where he is in the custody of the earls of Halifax and Egremont ; they transfer him to George Collins and Thomas Ardran ; and finally, these last deliver him to the deputy-lieutenant of the Tower, to be kept a *close* prisoner. The answer of the two messengers, Blackmore and Watson, to the writ, was “ that they had him not in their custody.”

When the messengers had taken Mr. Wilkes to lord Halifax's, they were ordered to return to his dwelling and seize all his papers, of every kind whatever. They punctually obeyed these orders : they broke open every closet, bureau, and drawer, in the house ; Mr. Wood (the under secretary of state) and Mr. Webb (solicitor to the treasury) attending during this whole transaction. Just at this time earl Temple, Mr. Townsend (afterwards,

lord Sydney), Mr. Welsh, Mr. Hopkins, Mr. Cotes, and other gentlemen, arrived at Mr. Wilkes's. Mr. Wood asked earl Temple if he would see Mr. Wilkes's papers sealed up : but his lordship replied, that it was too barbarous an act for any human eye to witness; and all the other gentlemen present likewise refused. The papers were thrown promiscuously on the floor : and when collected from every part of the house, they were thrust into a sack; his Will (which was *sealed and indorsed*), and his *private* pocket-book, closed the mouth of the sack,—which was then carried to lord Halifax's.

As soon as it was known that Mr. Wilkes was sent to the Tower, the duke of Bolton and earl Temple went to that place, but they were not permitted to see him. They offered to become his bail, to the amount of a hundred thousand pounds each; but no notice was taken of their proposal. Mr. Heaton Wilkes (his brother) and Mr. Beardmore were likewise denied admittance, and many other persons. The next day (Sunday) they

repeated their application, but were still refused. The lieutenant-governor of the Tower kept a list of the persons who applied in this manner.

On the next morning (Monday, May 2) the court of common-pleas ordered a return to their writ of habeas-corpus. The return which was made in consequence, not appearing to the court sufficient, it was not allowed to be filed; but upon motion they granted another writ, directed to "the constable and so forth of the Tower of London."

On the morning of Tuesday May 3, Mr. Wilkes was brought to the bar of the court of common-pleas. He instantly laid his case before the court in an able speech;* his

* Mr. Wilkes's speech.

"I FEEL myself happy to be at last brought before a court, and before judges, whose characteristic is the love of liberty. I have many humble thanks to return for the immediate order you were pleased to issue, to give me an opportunity of laying my grievances before you. They are of a kind hitherto unparalleled in this free country, and I trust the consequences will teach ministers of arbitrary principles, that the liberty of an English

counsel also, serjeant Glynn, pleaded very eloquently in his behalf; asserting that his com-

subject is not to be sported away with impunity, in this cruel and despotic manner.

“ I am accused of being the author of the *North Briton*, No. 45. I shall only remark upon that paper, that it takes all the load of accusation from the sacred name of a prince whose family I love and honour as the glorious defenders of the cause of liberty,—and whose personal qualities are so amiable, great, and respectable, that he is deservedly the idol of his people. It is the peculiar fashion and crime of these times, and of those persons who hold high ministerial offices in government, to throw every odious charge from themselves upon majesty. The author of this paper, whoever he may be, has, upon constitutional principles, done directly the reverse; and is therefore, in me the *supposed* author, meant to be persecuted accordingly. The particular cruelties of my treatment, worse than if I had been a Scottish rebel, this court will hear; and, I dare say from your justice, in due time redress.

“ I shall perhaps still have the means left me to evince that I have been superior to every temptation of corruption. They may, indeed, have flattered themselves, that when they found corruption could not prevail, persecution might intimidate. I will shew myself superior to both. My papers have been seized; per-

mitment was not valid. This being a case of great expectation, the court took time to consider of it: and Mr. Wilkes was remanded back to the Tower, but not to be kept a *close* prisoner; his friends had now full liberty to see him in his confinement. When

haps with a hope the better to deprive me of that proof of their meanness, and corrupt prodigality, which it may possibly, in a proper place, be yet in my power to give."

Copy of the orders applied by the lieutenant-governor of the Tower, to the detention of Mr. Wilkes.

"THAT the warders appointed to keep a close prisoner, shall not presume to leave him for a moment alone, either night or day, or to change their duty with other warders, but by particular leave, or order from the constable, lieutenant, deputy-lieutenant, or (in their absence) the major, of the Tower.

"They are to permit no person to have admittance into the room he is confined in, or to speak to him, but by a particular order brought them by the major or gentleman jailer."

During the close confinement of Mr. Wilkes, the warders twice, at his earnest request, brought him pen ink and paper, to write to his daughter, and to his servants; but they stood by his chair the whole time, took

he left the hall, he was saluted by the people with the loudest acclamations, and in the

to the lieutenant-governor what he wrote, and again carried away the pen ink and paper.

The following is a copy of the letter which Mr. Wilkes wrote in the Tower to his daughter.

“ Tower, Sunday, May 1, 1763.

“ MY DEAREST POLLY,

“ I HAVE now full leisure to pay my compliments to you, and entirely to relieve you from the anxiety your kind affection for me will necessarily have given you at hearing of my commitment to this place. Be assured that I have done nothing unworthy of a man of honour, who has the happiness of being your father.

“ I am only accused of writing the last *North Briton*; yet my sword has been taken from me, all my papers have been stolen by ruffians, and I have been forcibly brought here. I have not yet seen my accusers, nor have I heard who they are. My friends are refused admittance to me: lord Temple and my brother could not be allowed to see me yesterday. As an Englishman, I must lament that my liberty is thus wickedly taken away: yet I am not unhappy; for my honour is clear, my health good, and my spirit unshaken,—I believe indeed, invincible. The most pleasing thoughts I have,

Tower by an illustrious train of visitors from all parts of the town. The court adjourned to Friday the 6th of May.

During this interval, his majesty gave orders to remove Mr. Wilkes from his post of colonel of the Buckinghamshire militia; which was signified to him by earl Temple, as lord-lieutenant of the county, in the following letter :

“ SIR,

“ At my return last night from the Tower, I received the enclosed letter from the earl of

are of you ; the most agreeable news I can hear, will be of the continuance of your health.

“ I beg you not to write a word of public business, or of my public situation.—Can you get me made *membre du parlement de Paris*? for that of Westminster is losing all its privileges.—Continue to love me ; and believe me, with the greatest warmth of affection,

your obliged father

JOHN WILKES.”

The secretaries of state did not choose to send this letter to Paris. But it was printed in the newspapers.

Egremont. In consequence of his majesty's commands therein signified, you will please to observe that you no longer continue colonel of the militia for the county of Buckingham.

“ I cannot, at the same time, help expressing the concern I feel in the loss of an officer, by his deportment in command endeared to the whole corps.

“ I am, sir,
your most obedient and most
humble servant,

TEMPLE.”

“ Pall-Mall, May 5, 1763.”

Enclosure.

“ MY LORD,

“ THE king having judged it improper that John Wilkes, esq. should any longer continue to be colonel of the militia for the county of Buckingham, I am commanded to signify his majesty's pleasure to your lord-

ship, that you do forthwith give the necessary orders for displacing Mr. Wilkes, as an officer in the militia for the said county of Buckingham.

“ I am, with respect, my lord,
your lordship’s most obedient
humble servant,
EGREMONT.”

“ Whitehall, May 4, 1763.”

Mr. Wilkes’s Answer.

“ MY LORD,

“ I HAVE this moment the honour of your lordship’s letter, signifying his majesty’s commands that I should no longer continue colonel of the militia for the county of Buckingham. I have only to return your lordship my warmest thanks for the spirit and zeal you have shewn in the support of that constitutional measure from the very beginning. Your lordship will please to remember, that I was among the foremost who offered their services to their country at that

crisis. Buckinghamshire is sensible, and has always acknowledged, that no man but your lordship could have given success to that measure in our inland county. I am proud of the testimony which your lordship is pleased to give me; and am happy, in these days of peace, to leave so amiable a corps in that perfect harmony which has from the beginning subsisted.

“ I have the honour to be,
with unfeigned respect,
my lord,
your lordship’s most obedient
and most humble servant,

JOHN WILKES.”

“ Tower, May 5, 1763.”

On Friday, the 6th of May, Mr. Wilkes was again brought up from the Tower to the court of common-pleas: when he made a very able address to the bench;* at the con-

* “ MY LORDS,

“ FAR be it from me to regret that I have passed so

clusion of which the lord-chief-justice Pratt rose, and pronounced in a very eloquent manner the opinion of the court. The following account of his lordship's argument is taken from the notes of Mr. Wilkes.

many more days in captivity ; as it will have afforded you an opportunity of doing, upon mature reflection, and repeated examination, the more signal justice to my country. The liberty of all peers and gentlemen,—and (what touches me more sensibly) that of all the middling and inferior set of people, who stand most in need of protection,—is, in my case, this day to be finally decided upon ; a question of such importance, as to determine at once whether English liberty be a reality or a shadow. Your own free-born hearts will feel with indignation and compassion all that load of oppression under which I have so long laboured : close imprisonment, the effect of premeditated malice ; all access to me for more than two days denied ; my house ransacked and plundered ; my most private and secret concerns divulged ; every vile and malignant insinuation, even of high treason itself, no less industriously than falsely circulated, by my cruel and implacable enemies ; together with all the various insolence of office ;—form but a part of my unexampled ill-treatment. Such inhuman prin-

“ His lordship arranged the whole matter in question under three distinct heads :

“ First, the legality of Mr. Wilkes’s commitment.

“ Secondly, the necessity of a specification

ciples of star-chamber tyranny, will, I trust, by this court, upon this solemn occasion, be finally extirpated ; and that henceforth every innocent man, however poor and unsupported, may hope to sleep in peace and security in his own house, unviolated by king’s messengers, and the arbitrary mandates of an overbearing secretary of state.

“ I will no longer delay your justice. The nation is impatient to hear, nor can be safe or happy till that is obtained. If the same persecution is, after all, to carry me before *another* court, I hope I shall find that the genuine spirit of Magna Charta,—that glorious inheritance, that distinguishing characteristic of Englishmen,—is as religiously revered *there*, as I know it is *here* by the great personages before whom I have now the happiness to stand ; and that (as in the ever-memorable case of the imprisoned bishops) an independent jury of free-born Englishmen will persist to determine my fate, as in conscience bound, upon constitutional principles, by a verdict of *guilty* or *not guilty*. I ask no more at the hands of my countrymen.”

of those particular passages in the 45th number of the North Briton, which had been deemed a libel.

“ And thirdly, Mr. Wilkes’s privilege as a member of parliament.

“ With respect to the first, his lordship observed, that he must consider a secretary of state’s warrant through the whole business as nothing more than the warrant of a common justice of the peace; and he asserted that no magistrate had a right *ex officio* to apprehend any person without stating the particular crime of which he was accused: but at the same time he observed, there were many precedents where a nice combination of circumstances gave so strong a suspicion of facts, that though the magistrate could not be justified *ex officio*, he was nevertheless supported in the commitment even without receiving any particular information for the foundation of his charge. The word *charge*, his lordship said, was in general greatly misunderstood; and did not mean the accusation brought against any person taken up,

but his commitment by the magistrate before whom he might be brought. Upon the whole of this point, according to the customary rule,—which had been for a series of years observed by the sages of the law (even in the reign of Charles the second, when the matter was so frequently contested),—his lordship was of opinion, that Mr. Wilkes's commitment was not illegal.

“ With respect to the second head—requiring a specification of the particular passages in the forty-fifth number of the *North Briton* which were deemed a libel,—his lordship said, that the insertion of these passages, so far as they related to the point in question, was not at all necessary: for even supposing the whole of the forty-fifth number of the *North Briton* to have been inserted in the body of the warrant, yet it by no means came under his lordship's cognizance at that time; for the matter in consideration then was, not the nature of the offence, but the legality of the commitment;—the nature of the offence not resting in the bosom of a judge, with-

out the assistance of a jury, and not being a proper subject of inquiry until regularly brought on to be tried in the customary way of proceeding.

“ With respect to the last head,—How Mr. Wilkes had a right to plead his privilege as a member of parliament,—his lordship said, that there were but three cases which could possibly affect the privilege of a member of parliament; and these were treason, felony, and the peace. ‘ The peace,’ as it is written in the institutes of the law, signifies a breach of the peace. It is to be remarked, that when the seven bishops were sent to the Tower, the plea that was used when the spiritual lords contended for their privilege, was, that they had endeavoured to disturb the peace. This, at that arbitrary time, was judged sufficient to forfeit their privilege; but, his lordship observed, out of the four judges there was but one honest man,—that was, Powel,—and he declined giving any opinion. His lordship then, turning to his brethren on each side (the other judges were

Clive, Bathurst, and Gould), said, that the privilege of parliament must be held inviolable and sacred : there were but three cases in which that privilege was forfeited, and it only remained to examine how far Mr. Wilkes's privilege was endangered. Mr. Wilkes was accused of writing a libel : a libel, in the sense of the law, was a high misdemeanour, but did not come within the description of treason, felony, or breach of the peace ; at most it had but a *tendency* to disturb the peace, and consequently *could not be sufficient to destroy the privilege of parliament.*"

The court were unanimous in this opinion ; and thereupon Mr. Wilkes was ordered to be discharged. Upon which he addressed himself to the bench, in a speech which the reader will find below in the note *.

* " MY LORDS,

" GREAT as my joy must naturally be at the decision which this court, with a true spirit of liberty, has been pleased to make concerning the unwarrantable seizure of my person, and all the other consequential griev-

When Mr. Wilkes had finished this address, the audience broke out into an universal shout of applause, which was often repeated. Mr. Wilkes staid some time in a room adjoining to the court, in expectation that the crowd would disperse: at last, finding that it continually increased, he left the place by a private door; but was recognized by a prodigious multitude of people, who

ances,—allow me to assure you, that I feel far less sensibly on my account, than I do for the public. The sufferings of an individual are a trifling object, when compared with the whole; and I should blush to feel for myself in comparison with considerations of a nature so transcendently superior.

“ I will not trouble you with my poor thanks; thanks are due to you from the whole English nation, and from all the subjects of the English crown. They will be paid you; together with every testimony of zeal and affection to the learned serjeant (Glynn) who has so ably and so constitutionally pleaded my cause, and in mine (with pleasure I say it) the cause of liberty. Every testimony of my gratitude is justly due to you; and I take leave of this court with a veneration and respect which no time can obliterate, nor can the most grateful heart sufficiently express.”

attended him, amidst continual acclamations, to his house in Great George-street, Westminster. The evening concluded with bonfires, illuminations, and other rejoicings.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE SECRETARIES
OF STATE.

AS soon as Mr. Wilkes came home from the court of common-pleas, he sent the following letter to the secretaries of state.

“ Great George-street, May 6, 1763.

“ MY LORDS,

“ ON my return here from Westminster-hall, where I have been discharged from my commitment to the Tower under your lordships’ warrant, I find that my house has been robbed, and am informed that the stolen goods are in the possession of one or both of your lordships. I therefore insist that you do forthwith return them to

your humble servant,

JOHN WILKES.”

Some timid people blamed this letter, as indecent towards the secretaries of state. Timidity is seldom correct. The expression of *stolen goods* alluded to some property that was taken exclusive of Mr. Wilkes's letters and papers; particularly to a silver candlestick taken out of his bedchamber, his pocket-book containing some bills, and a quarto paper book consisting of domestic accounts. Lord Temple and Mr. serjeant Glynn were present when he wrote the letter, and they both approved of it. This last fact is mentioned by Mr. Wilkes in his letter to Mr. Cotes, dated December 10, 1764.*

The next morning (May 7) Mr. Wilkes, attended by Mr. Grignion, of Russel-street, Covent-garden, went to the police-office, in Bow-street, and demanded a warrant to search the houses of the earls of Egremont and Halifax for the goods stolen out of his own,—which (as he had received information) were lodged at the said houses, or one of

* See vol. ii. p. 99, of this work.

them; but John Spinnage, esq. the sitting magistrate, refused to issue a warrant for that purpose.

The secretaries of state sent to Mr. Wilkes the following answer to his letter.

“ Great George-street, May 7, 1763.

“ SIR,

“ IN answer to your letter of yesterday, in which you take upon you to make use of the indecent and scurrilous expressions of your having ‘ found your house had been robbed, and that the stolen goods are in our possession;’ we acquaint you that your papers were seized in consequence of the heavy charge brought against you, for being the author of an infamous and seditious libel, tending to inflame the minds, and alienate the affections of the people from his majesty, and excite them to traitorous insurrections against the government: for which libel, notwithstanding your discharge from your commitment to the Tower, his majesty has or-

dered you to be prosecuted by his attorney-general.

“ We are at a loss to guess what you mean by *stolen goods* : but such of your papers as do not lead to a proof of your guilt, shall be restored to you ; such as are necessary for that purpose, it was our duty to deliver over to those whose business it is to collect the evidence, and manage the prosecution against you.

“ We are
your humble servants,

EGREMONT,
DUNK HALIFAX.”

Here is a direct avowal of the motive for seizing Mr. Wilkes’s papers ; a motive so malignant and detestable, as must make every man shudder at the very mention of it. It was observed by a very able lawyer (Mr. serjeant Hewitt,—afterwards lord Lifford, and lord-chancellor of Ireland), that this evidence was collected with as much violence, and with as little right by law, as some other *collections*

are made, for which the collectors are hanged when taken.

To the answer of the secretaries of state, Mr. Wilkes sent the following reply.

“ Great George-street, May 9, 1763.

“ MY LORDS,

“ LITTLE did I expect, when I was requiring from your lordships what an Englishman has a right to,—his property taken from him (and said to be in your lordships’ possession,)—that I should have received in answer, from persons in your high station, the expressions of ‘indecent and scurrilous’ applied to my legal demands.

“ The respect I bear to his majesty, whose servants it seems you still are (though you stand legally convicted of having in me violated, in the highest and most offensive manner, the liberties of all the commons in England), prevents my returning you an answer in the same Billingsgate language. If I considered you only in your private capacities,

I should treat you both according to your deserts: but where is the wonder that men who have attacked the sacred liberty of the subject, and have issued an illegal warrant to seize his property, should proceed to such libellous expressions? You say, ‘that such of my papers shall be restored to me, as do not lead to a proof of my guilt.’ I owe this to your apprehension of an action, not to your love of justice; and in that light, if I can believe your lordships’ assurances, the whole will be returned to me. I fear neither your prosecution, nor your persecution; and I will assert the security of my own house, the liberty of my person, and every right of the people, not so much for my own sake, as for the sake of every one of my English fellow-subjects.

“I am, my lords,

your humble servant,

JOHN WILKES.”

Mr. serjeant Glynn read this letter also before it was sent, and approved of it.

DISMISSION OF EARL TEMPLE.

THE same persons who had procured the removal of Mr. Wilkes from the command of the Bucks militia, in a few days afterwards advised his majesty to displace earl Temple as lord-lieutenant of that county. This mark of impotent malice met with the merited contempt of the public in general ; and his amiable countess, on the occasion, presented him with the following lines :

To honour virtue in the lord of Stowe,
The pow'r of courtiers can no further go ;
Forbid him court, from council blot his name,--
E'en these distinctions cannot rase his fame.
Friend to the liberties of England's state,
'Tis not to courts he looks to make him great ;
He to his much-lov'd country trusts his cause,
And dares assert the honour of her laws.

Lord le Despenser, who had been *lord Bute's* * chancellor of the exchequer, was ap-

* See page 75, above.

pointed to the vacant lieutenancy : the dismission took place on the 7th of May, and the new appointment was made on the 9th.

Lord Temple's conduct had always been marked with the most devoted loyalty towards the crown, and the most endearing deportment to the county ; for these were the natural features of his political principles and his private manners : no one was more patriotic ; none more amiable.

TRIALS OF THE KING'S MESSENGERS, AND THE SECRETARIES OF STATE.

WHEN Mr. Wilkes was discharged by the court of common-pleas, lord Temple resolved that actions at law should be commenced against the king's messengers ; the secretaries, and the under-secretary (Wood), of state ; and the solicitor of the treasury (Webb) ;

for the illegally seizing of Mr. Wilkes, and all the other persons apprehended under the general warrant. But as this was a matter in which his lordship could not publicly appear, it was agreed that Mr. Wilkes and the other injured parties should be the ostensible plaintiffs in these causes.

The first trial of the king's messengers came on in the court of common-pleas at Guildhall, before lord-chief-justice Pratt, on the 6th of July, 1763. The points contended for on the part of the crown were, 1. The legality of the warrant ; 2. The due execution of that warrant ; 3. A consideration of two acts of parliament, of the 7th of James I. and the 24th of George II., in the nature of a bar to the action against the defendants :— and the counsel for the crown insisted that the jury should find a special verdict.

The chief-justice, however, gave it as his opinion, that the jury could not be compelled to find a special verdict : and likewise delivered his judgment upon the three points of law, viz. 1. That the warrant was illegal ;

2. That it was illegally executed ; 3. That the secretaries of state were not within the acts of parliament of James I. and George II., and consequently that the action would lie against the messengers.

The jury found a verdict, with three hundred pounds damages, for the plaintiff, who in this cause was one of the journeymen printers taken into custody by the authority of the general warrant. All the other persons attached by the same authority brought actions, and they all recovered damages : but in every one of these causes the counsel for the crown, immediately upon the verdict being recorded, tendered a bill of exception against the opinions of the chief-justice and the verdicts of the jury ; and even *the first* of these bills appeared *ready* engrossed upon two skins of parchment. This conduct shewed that the ministry were determined to support and defend these violent measures with all their power ; and the following authentic paper verifies this fact.

Extract from the Treasury Minute-Book.

“ Whitehall Treasury Chamber.

“ Present—Mr. Grenville, first commissioner, and chancellor of the exchequer ;

Lord North,

Mr. Hunter,

Mr. Harris.

“ Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer signifies to my lords his majesty's pleasure, that all expences incurred, or to be incurred, in consequence of actions brought against the earl of Halifax, one of his majesty's principal secretaries of state, the under-secretary and messengers, and the solicitor of this office, for proceedings had by them in executing the business of their respective offices against the publishers of several scandalous and seditious libels, should be defrayed by the crown ; and that a sufficient sum of money should be, from time to time, issued to the solicitor of the treasury for that purpose.”

Another circumstance not unworthy of notice is, that lord North confessed in one of the debates on the arrears of the civil list some time afterwards, that these law proceedings cost government upwards of one hundred thousand pounds.

And here it must be observed, that had not a heavy purse been found, to contend against the public treasury, these illegal and arbitrary transactions could never have been brought to a judicial condemnation. It is to EARL TEMPLE, and to him alone, that the nation owes the condemnation of general warrants, and the arbitrary seizure of persons and papers. Every body knows that Mr. Wilkes had not fortune sufficient to enter the lists with government. Earl Temple spared no expence; he relaxed in no exertion. Inflexible in his principles, firm in his resolution, he was the sinew of that authority which gave security to every man in his own house. In former cases of general warrants, the unfortunate persons had no protectors; and

therefore they sunk under the weight of oppression: this was the first time that the arbitrary conduct of government in that respect was brought under a legal inquisition.

Actions were also brought against lord Halifax, secretary of state;* Mr. Wood, the under-secretary of state; and Mr. Webb, solicitor of the treasury. Lord Halifax evaded the action by casting essoigns, pleading privilege, and at length standing out in contempt of the court, till Mr. Wilkes was outlawed.†

But when the outlawry was reversed, the action was revived; and it was tried in the court of common-pleas, before lord-chief-justice Wilmot, on the 10th of November, 1769; when the jury gave Mr. Wilkes four thousand pounds damages.—A singular circumstance appeared upon the trial. Lord Halifax did not rely entirely upon the document entered in the treasury minute-book, for his

* Lord Egremont, the other secretary of state, died.

† See vol. iii. p. 215, of the present work.

exoneration from the expences of this action ; but had also procured a privy-seal for that purpose,*—that is, a warrant signed by the lord-privy-seal, by way of indemnification for whatever damages Mr. Wilkes should recover.

The action against Mr. Wood was tried in the court of common-pleas on the 6th of December, 1763, before lord-chief-justice Pratt ; when the jury gave Mr. Wilkes one thousand pounds damages.

Although the public-spirited liberality, and disinterested patriotism, indisputably shewn in bringing these important causes to issue, are to be wholly ascribed to earl Temple ; yet LORD-CHIEF-JUSTICE PRATT is equally entitled to the applause and gratitude of the nation, for his most honourable and intrepid resolution in *declaring the law* upon the most interesting points of public liberty and safety.

* This warrant was signed by the duke of Marlborough, who then held that office.

On the trial of Mr. Wood (the solicitor of the treasury), Mr. Webb, as a witness, swore, that while he was in Mr. Wilkes's house, *he had no key in his hand*; referring to the unlocking of Mr. Wilkes's bureau and drawers. For this evidence he was *indicted* for perjury, and tried before lord Mansfield; when the jury, after staying out a considerable time, acquitted him. He died before the *action* brought against him by Mr. Wilkes could be tried.*

* Vol. ii. page 72, &c.

MR. WILKES ERECTS A PRINTING-PRESS IN
HIS HOUSE.

THIS fatal measure was his ruin. Hitherto the ministry had no evidence of his being either the author or publisher of the North Briton. His sincere friends instantly foresaw, and particularly his truest and best friend earl Temple, that by admitting a number of persons into his house to reprint the North Briton, and to print some other pieces, he gave government an opportunity to obtain that evidence against him which they wanted. The editor of the present work heard lord Temple assure Mr. Wilkes that he (Wilkes) could not name any sum of money which his lordship would not be ready to advance, if Mr. Wilkes would remove the printing-press ; but he was obstinate, and would yield to no entreaty. He had been flattered by a few insidious people, that a new edition

of his *North Briton*, corrected and printed by himself, would have an immense sale, and gain him a considerable sum of money ; but the reverse proved the case.

All the law-proceedings against him concerning the *North Briton*, were supported by the evidence and treachery of the people whom he employed in his house, and who were the only witnesses produced against him. For this act of *re-printing* the *North Briton*, he was tried and convicted : he printed also a few copies of a *third* volume of the *North Briton*, for particular friends ; but this was never published. He at the same time printed, under the strictest privacy and caution, twelve copies of part of an infamous poem, called an *Essay on Woman* ; for which he was also prosecuted and convicted, upon the same evidence ;—one of the journeymen having stolen a copy of it, to the commission of which act of treachery and dishonesty he was bribed by the solicitor of the treasury. The copy thus obtained was laid before the cabinet council ; who resolved to prosecute

Mr. Wilkes for printing it, on the single evidence of this man. Mr. Wilkes observed with truth on this subject, "that if the North Briton had never appeared, the Essay on Woman would never have been called in question."*

AFFIDAVITS OF JOHN GARDINER, ESQ.
MICHAEL CURRY, PRINTER; AND GEORGE
FEARSLEY, BOOKSELLER.

[The three following testimonies upon oath, are clear, full, and conclusive to the important points to which they relate: and as they are the only documents of the facts which they contain, they deserve a place in this work.]

LONDON, TO WIT.

JOHN GARDINER, of the Inner-Temple, Esq. barrister at law, maketh oath and saith, that about twelve or one o'clock in the fore-

* See also vol. ii. pages 9 and following, of the present work.

noon, on Saturday the thirtieth day of April, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-three, he, this deponent, (being in Westminster-hall) heard, that a motion was then making in his majesty's court of common-pleas, for an habeas-corpus, to bring up the body of John Wilkes, esq. who, as this deponent was then informed, was a prisoner in the custody of some of his majesty's messengers in ordinary ; and this deponent saith, that he, immediately upon receiving such information, went into the said court of common-pleas, in order to see the event of the said motion. And this deponent further saith, that as soon as the said court had ordered the said writ of habeas-corpus to issue, this deponent went to the house of the said John Wilkes, esq. in Great George-street, Westminster, at the door of which house this deponent saw several gentlemen (friends of the said John Wilkes, as this deponent then understood and believed) who informed this deponent, that they could not gain any admission into the said house ; and further told this deponent,

that the king's messengers were in possession of the said house, and kept the door thereof: whereupon this deponent went up to the door of the said house, and knocked at the same; which was soon opened, and kept a little way open, by some person or persons from within. This deponent then asked Mr. Wilkes's servant, who appeared through the said opening of the said door, whether his master was within? Such servant returned for answer, that the said Mr. Wilkes was not; and added, that the said Mr. Wilkes had been carried to, and then was at, lord Halifax's. This deponent then asked the said servant to let this deponent into the said Mr. Wilkes's house; to which the said servant made answer, that it was not in his power, for that the messengers were in possession of the door. This deponent then desired to see such messengers; upon which, one of the said messengers (whose name was Blackmore, as this deponent believes) came in sight. This deponent then asked the said messenger, by what authority he kept Mr. Wilkes's friends out of his house?

Such messenger made answer, that he acted by virtue, or under the authority, of the secretary or secretaries of state, or used words to that or the like purport or effect. This deponent then desired such messenger to shew his authority, or produce the orders of the secretaries of state; which such messenger refusing to produce, this deponent then turned his discourse to the aforesaid servant of Mr. Wilkes, and asked him if his master had given any orders to keep his friends out of his house? Such servant replied, his master had given no such orders: whereupon this deponent turned round to the aforesaid gentlemen, whom he found at the said Mr. Wilkes's door as aforesaid, and desired them to follow him; and with one push or shove, opened the said door, and got into the said house, and went with all the said gentlemen into the front parlour of the said house: (among the said gentlemen were, to the best of this deponent's belief and recollection, Mr. Townsend, Mr. Walsh, Mr. Hopkins, Mr. Cotes, Mr. Philipps, and several others:)

this deponent then talked with the said messengers, and told them that he (this deponent) thought they had acted in a most illegal and unjustifiable manner, and that he (this deponent) apprehended they would be severely punished for such an outrage upon the laws of their country. Soon after Mr. Wood (who, as this deponent was informed and believes, was then deputy secretary of state) came into the said parlour of the said Mr. Wilkes's house, and immediately interrogated the said messengers (in a passionate tone of voice, as this deponent apprehended), Who had sent for him? Which question the said messengers not immediately answering, the said Mr. Wood repeated the same once again, or more. Some of the messengers then said, they had all sent for him, for that those gentlemen (meaning, as this deponent believes, this deponent and the said other friends of the said Mr. Wilkes) would force their way into the house. The said Mr. Wood then asked (in the same haughty tone of voice), Who was the person that would force his way, or

would come in? or used words to that or the like purport or effect. This deponent made answer, and declared, that he was one of the persons that would come into the said house, but that he knew of no force by himself or the said friends of Mr. Wilkes, or used words to that or the like effect; and all or most of the said gentlemen, who were friends of the said Mr. Wilkes, joined in the said declaration. Soon after this, one Philip Carteret Webb made his appearance in the said house, and entered into some private discourse with the said Mr. Wood; after which, to the best of this deponent's recollection as to point of time, the right honourable earl Temple came into the said parlour, when some discourse passed between the said earl and the said Mr. Wood and the said Mr. Webb; and after a good deal of altercation between the said Mr. Wood and the said Mr. Webb, and the said friends of the said Mr. Wilkes, the said Mr. Wood and Mr. Webb (who seemed to take upon themselves the sole direction and disposition of the said Mr. Wilkes's

house, and of every thing therein) asked the said earl, if he choosed to attend the officers or messengers while they were sealing up all the said Mr. Wilkes's papers? which the said earl then refused. The said Mr. Wood and Mr. Webb then made the same offer to this deponent, and to the other friends of the said Mr. Wilkes.

Soon after, this deponent quitted the house of the said Mr. Wilkes, and went with Mr. Beardmore (the solicitor of the said Mr. Wilkes) to the Tower of London, where the said Mr. Wilkes had been just committed a prisoner, as this deponent had been informed; and this deponent there applied to major Rainsford, who then commanded in the said Tower, and desired to be admitted to the said Mr. Wilkes, in order to consult with the said Mr. Wilkes, and fix upon a legal mode or plan for his enlargement: but the said major Rainsford then acquainted this deponent, that he had received orders from the secretaries of state, not to admit any person whatever to speak

with or see the said Mr. Wilkes; and further informed this deponent, that he (the said major Rainsford) had just before refused lord Temple the like admittance to the said John Wilkes; and this deponent further saith, that, to the best of this deponent's recollection and belief, the said major Rainsford demanded of this deponent his name; and informed this deponent that he had orders to take down the names of all persons who should apply for admittance to the said Mr. Wilkes.

And this deponent, upon his oath aforesaid, further saith, that between the hours of twelve and one on Sunday May the first, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-three, he, this deponent, called again upon the said major Rainsford and again desired the said major Rainsford to admit him (this deponent) to see and consult with the said Mr. Wilkes: but the said major Rainsford then again refused this deponent; as he did soon after several noblemen and gentlemen, and Mr. Heaton Wilkes (the brother

of the said John Wilkes), who all applied to the said major Rainsford for a like admittance to the said John Wilkes, in the presence of this deponent. The said Mr. Webb (who appeared to be, and was, as this deponent believes, a director and adviser in all the proceedings against the said John Wilkes) then being present in the said major Rainsford's room ; this deponent applied to the said Mr. Webb for admittance to the said Mr. Wilkes. The said Mr. Webb thereupon desired the said major Rainsford to permit this deponent to see and converse with the said Mr. Wilkes. The said major Rainsford answered, his orders were to admit no person to Mr. Wilkes, and that he could not comply with what the said Mr. Webb requested, or used words to that or the like purport and effect. The said Mr. Webb then replied, that it could not be the intentions of the secretaries of state to keep the said Mr. Wilkes so close a prisoner ; and again desired the said major Rainsford to admit this deponent to the said Mr. Wilkes, and added that he (the said Mr. Webb) would

indemnify him (meaning the said major Rainsford); to which the said major Rainsford then further answered, that he could not comply with the said Mr. Webb's request, nor would he break or disobey orders, or used words to that or the like purport and effect. The said Mr. Webb then said, that if either of the secretaries of state were in town, he would apply to them, and obtain an order to admit this deponent to the said Mr. Wilkes, and that he would either send or bring such order for such admittance in the afternoon. This deponent, confiding in the said promise of the said Mr. Webb, went again to the said Tower between eight and nine o'clock of the same first of May, and again applied to the said major Rainsford for such admittance ; but was again refused admittance by the said major, who then informed this deponent, that he had not received any orders from the secretaries of state, nor had he heard any thing from the said Mr. Webb. And this deponent further saith, that he (this deponent) on Monday the second of May, between the hours of

two and three o'clock in the afternoon, again applied to the said major Rainsford for admittance to the said John Wilkes, but was again denied such admittance by the said major Rainsford. And this deponent further saith, that he has been ready and willing to testify all the facts aforesaid, before the honourable house of commons: but that the order for the attendance of this deponent before the said honourable house being further adjourned or enlarged to the twenty-seventh day of January next, this deponent cannot then attend the said house; as he (this deponent) had taken his passage for the West-Indies before he (this deponent) was served with any order to attend the said honourable house.

J. GARDINER.

Sworn at the mansion-house, in the city of London, this seventeenth day of December, in the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty-eight, before me,

SAMUEL TURNER, Mayor.

[AN extract from the following affidavit was published by Mr. Wilkes in the Political Register, to which he prefixed the observations which here also accompany it.]

“I KNOW that it is a fixed principle with Mr. Wilkes, to submit to the public every circumstance which bears any relation to his public conduct. In pursuance of this maxim, invariably followed by himself, I am sure he will forgive one of his friends sending to you, even before the house meets, the inclosed important affidavit. It relates to the infamous manner in which the administration of 1763, the tools and successors of the accursed Scot (when in a panick the reins dropped out of his hands), obtained the copy of part of the Essay on Woman, and likewise the evidence given both at the bar of the house of lords and in the king’s-bench.* That administration appear to have had no scruples about a robbery of the subject in any way : either by

* Related afterwards, in vol. ii. pages 9, 10, of the present work.

force, under a general warrant; or by fraud, in corrupting a domestic,—afterwards receiving themselves, and turning to their own profit, the goods which another had stolen. The first was executed by the under-secretary of state, by the solicitor of the treasury (whose house this affidavit proves to be a den of thieves), and the king's messengers, in person: the other by the money of the treasury; distributed by their own solicitor, and the oldest of the king's messengers (the most hackneyed in the ways of corruption). When this black transaction was told in France, there was not an Englishman at Paris who did not blush for the honour of his country; except at the hotel de Brancas, where the English ambassador (the earl of Hertford) then lodged. Every one there, at that time, who was past sixteen, was likewise past blushing.

“ I trust that the whole truth will at last be brought to light. This affidavit will go a great way; but Curry seems cautious of revealing some circumstances at the beginning of the affair, and perhaps may fear he should

run great risks in telling how he came by that copy which in the end he gave to Faden. He may dread the consequences to himself of so ample a confession on oath ; but I hope the whole of this wicked ministerial scene will be examined into by the grand committee of grievances in the ensuing session, and the living evidence of the several facts be produced.— As the house of commons are chosen by the people to be the grand inquest of the nation, I think Mr. Wilkes ought to consider it as his duty to make the appeal to them. It seems to me to lie as strictly among the business for which a grand committee of grievances is appointed every session, as the other affair of the alteration of the records in a criminal cause by a judge, in his own house, falls within the province and jurisdiction of the grand committee of the courts of justice.

“ This affidavit tells us how a small part of the public money has been bestowed on one ministerial agent. Hereafter you shall have the account of a good many thousand pounds : for a great personage complained, in February

last, that ‘ Wilkes had cost him ninety-two thousand guineas ;’ which, I prophesy, will, under some general head of expence, be begged by a *gracious message* to the present house of commons, and carefully kept out of the infinite debts of the civil list when they are laid before parliament.

“ I shall now content myself with saying, that in our times no man has suffered such base and cruel wrongs as Mr. Wilkes, for only a spirited opposition to a despotic minister ; that against no man have such mean, treacherous, and dishonourable methods, been pursued ; that every party and faction has in their turns oppressed him,—which I hold to be the strongest proof that he is of no party or faction.”

AFFIDAVIT.

MICHAEL CURRY, of St. Peter’s Mancroft, in the city of Norwich, printer, maketh oath and saith, that in the month of May one thousand seven hundred and sixty-three, he was hired by John Wilkes, esquire, of Great George-street, Westminster, at the rate of

twenty-five shillings per week ; that he lived in the house of the said Mr. Wilkes, and was boarded and regularly lodged there ; that he was employed by the said Mr. Wilkes, in several things about his private press ; that the said Mr. Wilkes employed this deponent to compose and print part of a poem entitled *An Essay on Woman* ; that the said Mr. Wilkes gave this deponent the strictest charge to keep it secret, and to suffer no person whatever to see the said poem ; that the said Mr. Wilkes ordered this deponent to work off only twelve copies,—which were all to be delivered, and were actually given, to the said Mr. Wilkes himself ; but that without the knowledge of the said Mr. Wilkes, this deponent worked off another copy for himself. That from the carelessness of this deponent, four pages (only) of the said poem came into the hands of one Jennings, who likewise worked at the said Mr. Wilkes's ; that by the means of this Jennings it was shewn to Mr. Farmer, Mr. Faden, and the reverend Mr. Kidgell : that the first application made to this

deponent was by Farmer ; who came, as he pretended, on his own curiosity, to see the rest of the poem called *An Essay on Woman*, having seen some part of it in the hands of Jennings,—which Jennings, he said, told him, he had it from the house of the said Mr. Wilkes ; that this deponent would not then shew Farmer any thing : that a few nights after Farmer called again on this deponent ; that they retired to St. John's Gate coffee-house ; that Farmer repeated he had some parts in black ; that this deponent then said to Farmer, that no poetry had been done in black at the said Mr. Wilkes's, and therefore Jennings must have come by those verses at some other house, the parts of the *Essay on Woman* being in red, (which this deponent said to evade, although the proofs were in black ;) that Farmer told this deponent, he wanted it to oblige a Roman-catholic gentleman, and that he would give two guineas, or any thing, to get it ; that he actually laid down two guineas,—which this deponent refused, and told Farmer that he was not upon an honest de-

sign; that he could not conceive for what reason a Roman-catholic gentleman particularly should offer two guineas, or any sum, for what Farmer must know was not from the quantity worth sixpence; that this deponent then paid for the pint of beer before him, telling Farmer that if he would call the Sunday morning following this deponent would speak to the purpose, and then quitted the house: that this deponent then discovered the affair to a friend; and when Farmer came to this deponent on the Sunday, this deponent told him that he had destroyed the copy, and that he hoped that would end any further visit on that head: that the next day this deponent waited on Mr. Churchill; that this deponent asked him if any harm could come to Mr. Wilkes, or this deponent, for the *Essay on Woman*; that Mr. Churchill said there could not, but for any thing the people in power could do they might be damned; that however he would write to Mr. Wilkes, who was then in France. That the next application was by Hassell, the overseer of Mr.

Faden,—who desired this deponent would go to the Globe tavern, as Mr. Faden wanted to speak to this deponent on some business ; that this deponent accordingly went ; that when Faden and this deponent were alone, Faden informed him, that Farmer had given him a few pages of the *Essay on Woman*, which the said Faden had shewn to a clergyman, and that clergyman to a nobleman,—and that if this deponent would oblige him with a copy of the whole for that nobleman, he would be this deponent's friend, and was positive that the person (as he was in power) would make an ample provision for him (this deponent) ; that this deponent pretended ignorance of the whole at this meeting ; that another meeting was soon after had with the said Faden at the said Globe tavern ; that the said Faden promised this deponent he should be taken care of,—and if he would give the said Faden a copy of the *Essay on Woman*, this deponent might have any sum he named, or any place he should name which it was in their power to get ; that several other meetings were had

between the said Faden and this deponent ; that the same offers were repeated,—and ten, twenty, a hundred guineas, or any sum, would be given as a security that the copy should be returned ; that Mr. Wilkes was all this time in France : that there was a strong report that Mr. Wilkes intended to prosecute this deponent for felony, in having stolen a copy of the *Essay on Woman* ; that this deponent applied to see Mr. Wilkes on his return from France, and was refused by his servant ; that soon after, the applications to this deponent were renewed by the said Faden and the said Hassell ; that he was desired to name any sum ; that he might depend on being supported from any injury he might apprehend, and firmly rely on being protected by those in power ; that otherwise he might be prosecuted for having printed the copy ; that afterwards the reports of this deponent's being to be prosecuted by Mr. Wilkes for felony gaining ground, this deponent in a passion went to the said *Globe* tavern, sent for the said Faden, and gave him the copy, saying, he hoped

that he should be taken care of, as he found he was not safe either in keeping or destroying the copy ; that the said Faden then gave him five guineas as a security to return him the copy, and promised him protection. That this deponent went with the said Faden on the same evening to the house of Philip Carteret Webb, esquire, solicitor to the treasury, in Great Queen-street, where was the reverend Mr. Kidgell ; that the said Webb bid this deponent be easy, for that he should be provided for ; that this deponent afterwards for several weeks lodged and boarded in the said Webb's house ; that this deponent was often told by the said Webb that government would take care of him, if he would give evidence on the trials against Mr. Wilkes,—that he must remain staunch, and directions as to what this deponent should say on the trials were given him by the said Webb ; that a few days before the meeting of the parliament, the said Webb bid the said Faden take this deponent out of town ; that accordingly the said Faden and this deponent went first to Hounslow, then to Hampton-court, and after-

wards to Knightsbridge, till the morning the house sat,--when they went to the Horn tavern in Westminster, where were the said Webb and the said Kidgell, and from thence to give evidence before the house of lords. That the said Webb a few days afterwards carried this deponent to the earl of Sandwich, who was then secretary of state; that his lordship said to this deponent, you have saved the nation, and you may depend on any thing that is in my power; that this deponent said he was without money, to which his lordship replied, he must not hear that: that the said Webb added, 'You had no occasion to mention that:' that at the bottom of his lordship's stairs the said Webb ordered this deponent to go to Mr. Carrington, one of the king's messengers: that this deponent accordingly went to the said Carrington's, who gave him a guinea and a half,—for which this deponent gave a receipt in these words, 'For subsistence, for which I shall be accountable,' or to that effect; that the same payment of a guinea and a half was continued for about twenty-five weeks by the said Carrington; that the said Car-

rington said the reason why he took receipts was, that he was answerable to the government for that money ; that this deponent was assured by the said Webb, from time to time, that he should be amply provided for ; that this deponent was afterwards employed by the said Webb to compromise the verdicts with the other printers, which this deponent did for the other printers at the sum of one hundred and twenty pounds each ; that this deponent had received nothing from the said Carrington for some time before the verdicts were compromised ; that he received for his own share two hundred thirty-three pounds six shillings and eight-pence,—which the said Webb declared was for the trouble, and satisfaction for what had been done ; that then this deponent, finding no more money coming from the said Carrington, and his life being made very uneasy to him at London, retired into the north. **MICHAEL CURRY.**

Sworn at the mansion-house, in London,
the third of August, one thousand seven
hundred and sixty-eight, before

THOMAS HARLEY, Mayor.

The King against John Wilkes, esquire, on an Information for publishing the North Briton.

GEORGE KEARSLEY, of Ludgate-street, London, bookseller, maketh oath and saith, that all the letters from John Wilkes, esquire, the defendant, directed to this deponent, and which were produced at the trial of the cause, were taken out of this deponent's bureau in his dwelling-house, and from off his files, by virtue of a general warrant from one of his majesty's secretaries of state for apprehending and seizing 'the authors, printers, and publishers, of a seditious and treasonable paper entitled the North Briton, number 45, together with their papers,' and thereby carried to his majesty's secretaries of state,—as the warrant directed, and (the deponent verily believes) was accordingly obeyed.

GEORGE KEARSLEY.

Sworn in court, the sixteenth day of June, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-eight.

By the Court.

ATTEMPT TO ASSASSINATE MR. WILKES.

THIS very extraordinary affair has never yet been satisfactorily explained. The proper motto to any account of it would probably be the excellent observation of Machiavel, “ In all cases, not only of assassination, but of deep danger, no man should be employed who is always and entirely in his senses. If he succeeds, the credit is your own ; if he does not, your answer is ready : that you would not have employed a *madman* in such a service.”

Similar to this was the answer of lord Barrymore to the privy-council, when he was examined concerning the rebellion of the year 1715. He said “ he had an estate of fifteen thousand pounds a-year ; and could they believe him mad enough to risk that property in such a chimerical enterprise ? ”

On the 6th of December, 1763, in the evening, a man came to Mr. Wilkes’s house,

and desired to speak with him on particular business. It appearing by his dialect that he was a Scotchman, and he being an entire stranger, he was refused admittance; on which he went to a coffee-house, near Parliament-street, where he was overheard, by a person then present, to declare, that himself and ten others were determined to cut off Mr. Wilkes, let the consequence be what it would. The gentleman gave information of the above declaration next morning, by letter, to Mr. Wilkes, desiring him to be on his guard. The matter rested thus till the 8th; when, in the morning, the same person came again, and brought a letter for Mr. Wilkes signed "Alexander Dunn," soliciting an interview. He was desired to call again at one o'clock, which he did accordingly, and seven o'clock was then appointed; in the mean time Mr. Wilkes got several of his friends, gentlemen of distinction, about him. At the latter hour the man came, and was shewn into the parlour,—where he waited a short time, and was in-

formed that Mr. Wilkes was then alone and he should be introduced to him ; but on going out at the parlour door, two gentlemen, who had placed themselves behind it, seized him by each arm, and threw him on his back. On searching him a new penknife was found in his pocket, which he pretended he had purchased nine months before ; but on being further questioned he said six months, and at last owned that he had bought it at Chatham about a fortnight since.

Proper affidavits having been made of the whole transaction, and a warrant procured, he was taken into custody.

Mr. Wilkes, on the first intimation of Dunn's design, treated the affair with levity, and intended to take no notice of it. But Mr. George Onslow (now earl Onslow) happening to be present, insisted that an inquiry should be made into it.

Complaint being made in the house of commons, of Dunn's attempt on Mr. Wilkes's life, the house ordered Dunn to attend at the

bar; but when he was there, without examining him, the house were of opinion that he was insane, and therefore discharged him.*

The following are the authentic testimonies on this subject.

In the King's Bench.

“JOHN WILKES, of Aylesbury, in the county of Bucks, esquire; Matthew Brown, servant to the said Mr. Wilkes, and Mathias Darly, of the parish of St. Ann, Soho, in the Liberty of Westminster, engraver; severally make oath: and first, the said John Wilkes for himself saith, that he (this deponent) verily believes that he is in danger of his life, from the wicked, malicious, revengeful, and unprovoked menaces, of one Alexander Dunn, who (this deponent is informed) is a Scotch officer; and who, between eleven and twelve of the clock last Tuesday evening, demanded

* Commons' Journals, vol. xxix. page 702.

entrance into this deponent's house, in Great George-street, Westminster, and threatened violence to his person ; and this deponent further saith, That about nine of the clock this morning he received the letter hereunto annexed, marked (A), which this deponent is informed, and verily believes, is of the hand writing of the said Alexander Dunn.—And this deponent, Matthew Brown, for himself saith, That he saw a person at the time first abovementioned, make several very rude and violent endeavours to come into the house of the said Mr. Wilkes ; and, upon his being refused by this deponent, threatened revenge to Mr. Wilkes, and also to this deponent ; and by the best description and information which this deponent has been able to collect, believes the said person's name is Alexander Dunn.—And this deponent Mathias Darly, for himself saith, That he (this deponent) did yesterday write to Mr. Wilkes the letter hereunto annexed (B), the contents of which are true, and that the Scotch officer therein alluded to is the said

Alexander Dunn : and this deponent further saith, That he is not moved by any malice or resentment against the said Alexander Dunn, but thought it his duty, as a member of society, to make the above intimations to Mr. Wilkes, in order that he might concert the necessary measures for his personal safety.— And therefore the said John Wilkes craves sureties of the peace against the said Alexander Dunn, not out of hatred or malice, but merely for the preservation of his life and person from danger.

JOHN WILKES,
MATTHEW BROWN,
MATHIAS DARLY.

The deponent John Wilkes sworn at his house in Great George-street, Westminster, he being indisposed, the eighth day of December, one thousand seven hundred and sixty three, before me,

W. MAPELSDEN, by commission.

Matthew Brown, and Mathias Darly, sworn in Great Ormond street, the eighth day of December, one thousand seven hundred and sixty three, before

E. WILMOT.

London, Dec. 8, 1763.

SIR,

As I have something of consequence to communicate to you, I should be glad to know what time would be most convenient for me to call upon you this day; I called once before, and was refused admittance. Be so good as send me an answer by my servant, who will wait for it. Lieutenant Crockat, of dragoons, who is now in Scotland, desires his compliments to you, for the many civilities shewn him when he was quartered near your country-seat. You may be assured, that many of the Scotch have still a regard for you, and none of them more so than your most humble

and obedient servant,

ALEX. DUNN.

Direct to me at Mr. Whyte's, Peruke-maker, Lieutenant of Marines.

To John Wilkes, esq.

MR. DUNN,

Mr. Wilkes's compliments to Mr. Dunn, and desires to see him at seven o'clock this evening: is obliged to him for the account of Mr. Crockat.

(A)

London, Dec. 7, 1763.

SIR,

I SHOULD not do my duty if I did not acquaint you, that the young Scotch officer, that wanted entrance at your house, is a villain, and his intentions are of blackish dye. I had been in his company for near four hours. That part of our conversation that relates to you, consisted chiefly of his intentions of massacreing you the first opportunity, and that there was thirteen more gentlemen of Scotland of the same resolution, and confederates of his, who was resolved to do it, or die in the attempt. Last night, when your trial was over, the gentlemen at the coffee house quitted the room that I was in (on account of the shouts in the hall), and left the Scotch hero and I together; but I

abruptly left the room, and went after the people to Great George-street, and on hearing a noise at your door, I went up, and, to my great surprise, saw the Scotchman a-trying for entrance; I knocked and had admittance, which enraged the hero so much, that he swore revenge against the servant, and was very troublesome. When I went out, I heard a gentleman taking him to task upon his vowing revenge on you or your servant, upon which I told the gentleman a small part of what I knew, and he put him in the hands of two watchmen, and ordered him to the roundhouse; but at the corner of Great George-street, I am told, he was rescued, and ran away. There was conversation passed between him and the company that is not safe to communicate by letter: his principles and zeal make it unsafe for such an abandoned wretch to be at large. Your own discretion, I hope, will guide you to prevent any thing that may be intended. I am, with all respect, sir, yours,

M. DARLY.

To Mr. Wilkes,
Great George-Street.

Cranborn-alley,
Leicester-fields.

(B)

E. WILMOT,

L. S.

England, to wit.

WHEREAS I have received information, on the oath of John Wilkes, esquire, Matthew Brown, and Mathias Darly, That one Alexander Dunn, between eleven and twelve o'clock on Tuesday evening last, demanded entrance into the house of John Wilkes, and threatened violence to his person; and hath since, in the hearing of Mathias Darly, declared his intention to massacre the said John Wilkes, the first opportunity; and therefore the said John Wilkes craves sureties of the peace against the said Alexander Dunn, not out of hatred or malice, but merely for the preservation of his life and person from danger.

These are therefore to will and require, and, in his majesty's name, strictly to charge and command you, and every of you, upon sight hereof, to apprehend and take the said Alexander Dunn, and bring him before me, or one other of the justices of his majesty's

court of king's-bench, if taken in or near the cities of London or Westminster, otherwise before some justice of the peace living near the place where he shall be herewith taken: to the end he may become bound with sufficient sureties for his personal appearance, in his majesty's court of king's-bench, on the first day of Hilary term, to answer the premises, and, in the mean time, to keep the peace, and be of good behaviour towards all his majesty's subjects, especially towards the said John Wilkes; and hereof fail not at your peril.

Given under my hand and seal this eighth day of December one thousand seven hundred and sixty three.

To Richard Elston, my tipstaff, and to all chief and petty constables, head-boroughs, tything-men, and all others whom these may concern.

A NORTH BRITON EXTRAORDINARY.

[Mr. Wilkes printed at his press in his own house, a NORTH BRITON EXTRAORDINARY ; written by a late director of the East India company. From some fluctuation in the politics of the company, it was never published. But being a paper containing many historical facts of great public interest, it is deserving of a place in this work.]

Dicere verum

Quid vetat?

THURSDAY, APRIL THE 7TH, 1763.

WHATEVER difference we may find in other respects between the present and late minister, in the exertion of a determined and inflexible resolution, they certainly bear a near resemblance to each other. One distinction, indeed, ought to be made even here, that Mr. Pitt's resolution arose from conscious virtue, and the earl of Bute's from conscious power ; but to the credit of the latter we must observe, that he hath shewn as inflexible a spirit in supporting every measure

which was wrong, as the former could possibly maintain in promoting what was right. Regardless of all petty and private considerations, blessed with the most excellent qualities of head and heart, and sincerely attached to the interests of his country, Mr. Pitt proceeded with that well-grounded confidence, to which he was intitled by those qualifications, and in which he was justified by the most extraordinary success. Without any real regard to this country, wholly engrossed by private views, the qualities of his head as yet doubtful, and those of his heart too plain, the earl of Bute hath, through his administration, behaved with that insolence, which in narrow minds is always the consequence of power. When I mention insolence, I would be supposed to include meanness; for they always are to be found in the same place; and however different they may appear, wait only for a difference of circumstances to call them forth, and to prove them inseparable. In both these virtues, I apprehend the present minister stands unrivalled, and the in-

fection seems to spread through all his coadjutors. Numberless instances might be produced to justify this remark; but no one is more proper, and better calculated to shew both these excellent qualities operating at one time, and on the same subject, than the treatment which our East India company in general, and Mr. Rous, a very worthy member of it in particular, have met with. However triflingly this affair may have been talked of, it is, in reality, of very serious and general consequence. At this time especially, when their election is drawing nigh, it is highly necessary that a clear and full account of that affair, with the real merits of the case, should be laid before the public; for putting it in our power to perform which, we are greatly indebted to the correspondent who hath favoured us with the following letter.

To the North Briton.

SIR,

As a proprietor, I thought it not only my interest but my duty, to attend the general court when the conduct of Mr. Rous was to be examined. I cannot deny but, from the reports which were spread abroad, I was greatly prejudiced against that gentleman, and flattered myself with some degree of merit, if I could be instrumental in giving him up to public censure, which I had been taught to think he had deserved. For certainly, sir, I could never be justified in supposing him innocent, however boldly he might stand on his defence, when the honour and uprightness of the minister was engaged to prove him guilty; and when a court of directors had considered his misdemeanor as so gross and palpable, that they would not even hear him; that, when called upon, they would not enter into the affair, would not give him an opportunity of explaining his conduct, but forced a friend of

that gentleman's to move for his being called to an account at a general court, as one guilty of misconduct, merely to give him an opportunity of proving to the public, that his conduct had been fair and irreproachable. This I could never have believed without proof, though, at the meeting, the proof was too strong to admit of the least exception. Mr. Rous defended himself in such a manner, as to turn the shame, intended for him, on his adversaries ; he proved his behaviour not only to have been undeserving of reproach, but even worthy of approbation ; and the result of that affair was exactly what every candid man would have wished, what his friends expected, what his enemies feared, but what a stranger, as I was, could never have suspected. As I considered this affair as of the greatest consequence to the future welfare of the company, I was particularly attentive to every thing which passed ; I took down the substance of Mr. Rous's defence for my own use, which I now transmit to you for the satisfaction of the public, and

on which you are at liberty to make what remarks you think proper, or to leave every reader to make his own. You will observe I have taken this affair merely as it was considered, immediately relative to Mr. Rous, and as the affairs of the company were naturally interwoven with his justification; but should be glad if you will in your remarks bring it down to the present time.

The two grand objects of the company, even from the time of commencing the negotiation, under Mr. Pitt's administration, have constantly been:

1. A total exclusion of the French from Bengal, where the company enjoy extensive and valuable possessions, and from whence they derive their most profitable trade.

2. In the restitution of French territory, to fix such a period as would leave them nothing more than places of trade, without a single acquisition of territory by conquest or grant from the country powers, and it was found that the year 1744 or 1745 would effectually answer this purpose.

These views of the company were communicated to Mr. Pitt, in a letter from the chairman, dated the 27th of July, 1761, and at that time France acquiesced in what was then proposed.

On the 4th of June, 1762, a copy of the letter, mentioned above, was transmitted to lord Egremont, in consequence of a conversation which had passed between Mr Sullivan and his lordship, in which his lordship had been made acquainted with the contents of that letter, and had desired to see a copy of it.

On the 22d of June, Mr. Dorrien and Mr. Sullivan had a conversation with lord Egremont, in which his lordship observed, on the letter to Mr. Pitt, that it conveyed the outlines of a plan of pacification ; but he should be glad, in the most distinct manner, to know the company's expectations, and particularly, if they were ready, in return for excluding the French from Bengal, to give them back all their other comptoirs ; to which he was answered, that the chairman and deputy

would obtain powers from the court of directors for the transaction of this affair ; which method his lordship seemed to approve ; but when he was reminded, on desiring that their sentiments might be delivered at large in writing, that the French should be the first proposers, he declared, that the company should not be made acquainted with the propositions made by the French, though before the whole was concluded, the gentlemen in the direction should know their objections.

The gentlemen were repeatedly asked, by lord Egremont, if the company would be satisfied with excluding the French from Bengal (which his lordship said he believed they would not submit to) and granting them all their factories and former possessions on the Coromandel coast ? To this, answer was made, that it was meant the French should, in that case, possess all which they had possessed before the year 1745, but no grant whatsoever since that period ; and that they also meant to exclude the donations to Mr.

Duplex and others. They likewise expressed their wishes, that both companies might be prevented from making war with each other, or, at least, that the French might be limited to a certain number of troops: the first of which his lordship declared to be impossible; and the latter to be such an indig-
nity as no nation would bear.

On the 24th of June, the chairman, deputy, and Mr. Sullivan, in consequence of the preceding day's conversation, agreed on the outlines of a plan to be drawn up, as the private sentiments of those three gentlemen, which the chairman was desired to communicate to lord Egremont.

On the 25th of June, lord Egremont received this paper from the chairman, and said it was sufficient for his private information; but at the same time said he apprehended the French would not be prevailed upon to give up the Bengal trade.

On the 9th of July, Mr. Wood, deputy secretary of state, had a meeting at the India House, with the chairman and deputy; at

which he told them, that lord Egremont expected a very regular plan of the company's expectations to be laid before him ; and they had conversation concerning India.

On the 16th of July, Mr. Wood came again to the India House and informed the chairman and deputy, that he had directions to lay before them his lordship's sentiments, relative to the conversation of the 9th in writing ; which he did, by a letter delivered to them then, but dated the 9th of July, in which was contained, that lord Egremont having been informed, by Mr. Wood, that those gentlemen understood the only matter relative to the interests of the company, as far as they become an object in future negotiation with France, to be contained in Mr. Sullivan's letter to Mr. Pitt, his lordship considered that as the only matter lying before him from the secret committee, and that every thing else communicated, or that had passed in conversation, was not to be made use of—intimating, that it might not be amiss for the secret committee to be provided with

the necessary powers, and to digest their thoughts relative to the interests of the company, so far as they might become an object of consideration for his majesty's ministers, when the two crowns should come to treat of those affairs.

On the 21st of July, agreeable to what had been settled by the secretary of state, the secret committee (consisting of the chairman, deputy, Mr. Gough, and Mr. Tullie) were employed at a court of directors, to form a plan for the benefit of the company, to be laid before the ministry, and were also empowered to call in the assistance of any other person, and to report.

Soon after the secret committee met, with Mr. Hume and Mr. Sullivan, when those gentlemen desired time to give their thoughts in writing.

On the 12th of August, those two gentlemen produced their sentiments in writing; but lord Clive, who was then present, not having been prepared, gave his opinion only in discourse.

At these and other consultations Mr. Sullivan strongly recommended the giving back to the Indian powers the territories adjacent to Masulapatnam, and to make Masulapatnam a neutral city, where each company should have a factory; but neither should be allowed to erect fortifications. This was exactly the doctrine laid down in his plan above-mentioned.

On the 1st of September, at a court of directors, the chairman, after communicating the proceedings of the secret committee, intimated to the court, that lest more considerable offers should be expected, the cession of the territories of Masulapatnam unto the Subah of the Deckan had been thought of, for rendering the terms of which the plan consisted more admissible to the ministry; but that the secret committee, not apprehending themselves justified in coming to any resolution on so material a point, he desired the sentiments of the court thereupon; and the court, after mature debate, unanimously agreed (excepting the deputy chairman, and

another gentleman) that it was not proper to give up to the country powers the revenues of Masulapatnam, amounting to 50,000l. a year; and that therefore it should be no part of the plan to be laid before the government.

The above resolution was confirmed at the next court of directors.

The plan, which had been approved by the court of directors on the first of September, was left by the chairman at Lord Egremont's office on the 4th. It consisted of twelve articles, submitted with the greatest humility to the consideration of the ministry, enforced with the strongest arguments, and so clearly worded, explicitly commented on, that it was impossible the ministry should not have the clearest ideas of the company's interests in India.

In consequence of delivering in this plan, a letter was received from Mr. deputy secretary Wood, dated the 11th of September, importing lord Egremont's disappointment in not finding such lights in it, as might facili-

tate what he has extremely at heart, which is to procure the most advantageous terms possible for the company, when a peace shall be concluded. His disappointment in not seeing such a confidential communication of their real expectations, as he thought the government entitled to, from the support afforded to the company during the war—his observation, that if the company asked more than they expected to get, they not only laid a very useless load on the secretary of state, who was disposed to get even more than they asked, was it possible, but also confined and clogged the best intentions in their favour—his declaration—notwithstanding his sincere regard for the company, as a part of the whole, not to lose sight of the latter great object for any partial considerations. Mr. Wood's private opinion—that should the secretary of state find it impossible to keep up to the sentiments of the secret committee, with regard to what is to be insisted upon, the company would find it full as difficult to succeed in a

negotiation, which they seem desirous of managing themselves.

On the 16th of September the chairman waited on lord Egremont, in order to obtain an explanation of Mr. Wood's letter of the 11th. His lordship expressed great displeasure in regard to the sentiments of the secret committee, which had been transmitted to him ; and when he was assured by the chairman of the disposition of the directors to do every thing in their power to facilitate an accommodation with France, and was intreated to point out in what manner the directors might be able to promote that good purpose —his lordship—declined giving any answer. But although his lordship was backward in declaring his sentiments, his secretary was not at all so ; and very freely and without reserve charged the chairman with chicanery and dealing uncandidly with the government.

Thus treated without doors, and beset (to say no more) within, the secret committee began seriously to consider what might be the

consequence of the company's being deserted by the ministry in the negotiations of peace. They considered of alterations and new propositions, which might be more favourably received by the ministry, and resolved once more to take the opinion of the court of directors upon the point of giving up to the country powers the revenues of Musulapatnam, notwithstanding the resolutions of the two former courts. By this time the court of directors took the alarm, they saw to what a precarious situation the company would be reduced if they were not included in the peace, and therefore, in hopes of obviating all farther difficulties, they determined, though by a very small majority, to agree to a paper laid before them on the 22d of September, for restoring these revenues and territories to the country powers. This paper was left by Mr. Dorrien at lord Egremont's office, on the 30th, under the title of The farther sentiments of the secret committee, submitted to the ministry, being a supplement to their sentiments of the fourth.

The first notice taken of this paper of the 29th of September, was in a letter to Mr. Dorrien from Mr. Wood, dated the 16th of October; in which he mentions that a hurry of business had prevented his returning, agreeable to lord Egremont's order, the above-mentioned paper, and that he should be glad to put it into the chairman's or deputy's hands, and explain why it was of no use, concluding with these remarkable words—his lordship not choosing to meddle where he may do harm, or where it is put out of his power to do good.

In a subsequent conversation between Mr. Wood and Mr. Dorrien, on the 20th of October, Mr. Wood declared he had orders from lord Egremont to say, that—as this was the first time the government had taken upon themselves to make a peace for the East-India company, he expected they would have acted with candour and openness to him; but as he found they had only a mind to throw off a weight from their own shoulders and burthen his lordship with it, he was determined

not to submit to such usage, as it was no part of his duty to settle a peace for the company, but had only offered it in regard to them, and that the proposals first delivered were such as he should have been ashamed to offer to the French ministry. That the supplement being delivered so long as twenty-six days after the first memorial, lord Egremont did not think proper to regard it : had both come together, the plan might have been reasonable. He added, that it had, in the general preliminaries, been proposed to France to restore her comptoirs or factories on the coast of Malabar and Coromandel, as also in Bengal, and a trade allowed them up the Ganges, but that they should raise no fortifications at the latter place, nor be suffered to have any armed force there : this they had agreed to, but with their usual artifice, in saying, all their possessions, instead of their comptoirs, should be restored ; which word having a great latitude, he, Mr. Wood, advised lord Egremont by no means to admit of. That the above memorial being delivered in the interim, his lordship

had dropt making any reply, and there the affair rested ; but that his lordship had entrusted him, in case he met with any gentleman in the direction he thought proper to open it to, to say, that notwithstanding he had declined taking any thing upon himself, yet, if the company would prepare one general article to be inserted in the preliminaries, his lordship would try to serve them.—After some discourse, Mr. Wood himself drew up the following article, which the deputy chairman desired he might lay before the secret committee, as he could not without their consent venture to agree to any thing of himself.

All the comptoirs taken in India, either by the French or English, to be restored. The French and English to have nothing more than factories at Masulapatnam : the town and its dependencies to be restored to the nabob ; an hundred soldiers to be kept if thought proper by each nation, for protection of trade.

The French, though restored to the trade of the Ganges, and to mere factories for that

purpose, are to have no troops or fortifications there.

After this, Mr. Wood declared that lord Egremont could not meddle any farther, nor deviate in the least from the article the company should propose, and that in case they were left out by being unreasonable in their demands, the blame must fall upon themselves, and his lordship should not postpone the public peace on their account, if the other terms could be settled : he then desired that what the company had to offer might be delivered on Friday morning before ten o'clock, this being Wednesday ; there being a council appointed for that day, and he did not doubt but he should prevail upon lord Egremont to receive it.

This conversation and article were taken into consideration by the secret committee, on the 21st of October, and on the 22d the chairman and deputy waited on lord Egremont, and requested farther time, that the secret committee might consider the terms to be offered in behalf of the company, accord-

ing to this (curious) article, drawn up, and delivered by Mr. Wood. His lordship readily acquiesced with this request, and said, he would send them the article to be proposed for their consideration, subject to such alterations as they should think proper, which should be sent to the court of France, and then the committee should be made acquainted with the result thereof, and be informed from time to time, what passed on the subject.

The chairman and deputy expressed their concern in having incurred his lordship's displeasure, by not fully answering the expectations of government in the memorial offered by the secret committee. To which his lordship answered, he would argue the case coolly and without resentments ; but that he thought the committee were not candid in offering such terms as they could not expect the French to comply with. The chairman and deputy then entered into the views of that memorial, and represented the great danger of restoring to the French the

territories they had formerly possessed in the Carnatic, as the company would thereby risk the great debt due to them from the nabob, after having engaged in a long and expensive war, to prevent the French from aggrandizing themselves, according to Mr. Duplex's ambitious views. That these considerations induced the company to give it as their real sentiments, that the French ought to be restored only to the state they were in on that coast before the year 1744, and confined as much as possible to a mercantile system ; and at the same time to remove a subject of future dissensions, they had been induced to relinquish their own pretensions to Masulapatnam, thinking likewise that this offer might prevent any obstacle to the general peace. To which his lordship replied, he could see no reason for such a concession, nor that it would answer any purpose ; however, at least, it ought to be kept in reserve.

At eight o'clock the very same night (Fri-

day the 22d of October) a message was sent by Mr. Wood, in writing, to the chairman, enclosing the following preliminary article, by lord Egremont's order, and signifying at the same time, that his lordship would dispatch his messenger on the morrow night, or Sunday morning.

“ In the East Indies England shall restore to France the several comptoirs which that crown had before the present war, on the coast of Coromandel and Malabar, as well as in Bengal ; but the comptoirs in this last part of India shall not be restored, but on condition that his most christian majesty obliges himself not to erect any fortification, nor entertain any troops there, and the most christian king engages to restore to the king of Great Britain all the conquests, that may have been made by the French forces over the English in the East Indies.”

This article thus sent down late at night, and on which no further time for deliberation was given than the next day, was laid

before the secret committee about noon, on Saturday the twenty-third of October. It was in vain to hope for any alteration in respect to Bengal, and equally in vain to mention the year 1744 as the period of restitutions, and extremely difficult to fix a precise meaning to the word *comptoirs*, which (if it included settlements, factories, and possessions) would instantly restore to France that immense extent of trade, territory, and power, which nothing but Providence had prevented, after the commencement of the war, from bringing utter ruin on our company.

In this dilemma all that the secret committee could do, and more, indeed, than they could expect to succeed in, according to the present humour of the ministry, was to make some alterations in the period of *uti possidetis* now set down to them; and with this view they came to a resolution to return the article altered as follows :

“ In the East Indies England shall restore to France the several settlements which that

crown had at the commencement of the present war between the two companies in India, viz. in 1749, on the coasts of Coromandel, and Malabar, in the condition they shall be found; and also the comptoirs they had in Bengal. But these restorations shall not be made but on condition that his most christian majesty renounces all claim to subsequent acquisitions, and obliges himself not to erect any fortification, nor entertain any troops in Bengal; and the most christian king engages to restore to the king of Great Britain all the conquests that may have been made by the French forces over the English in the East Indies."

The committee also sent up, at the same time, two articles, which they intreated might be made part of the preliminaries, or be considered in the general treaty.

The first related to acknowledging the rights of the present subah of the Deckan, and the nabob of the Carnatic. The second, to the restoration of the Chinese families and

slaves carried from Bencoolen by the count d'Estaing, and a reimbursement of the charges incurred by the English company, on account of the French prisoners of war. A letter was also approved by the committee, and designed by the chairman and deputy, in which all ambiguity of expression was carefully avoided, and the reasons of the several alterations in the preliminary articles plainly and forcibly laid down.

On Sunday the 24th of October, the chairman received a message from Mr. Wood, desiring to have some conversation with him that day, or next morning. The chairman accordingly waited on him, and was told, there having been no actual war in India between the two companies, in the year 1749, that those words, "the present war," seemed improper: it was therefore agreed, that the commencement of hostilities should be inserted in their stead, which would cure the impropriety without altering the sense of the article.

On Monday the 25th, at ten at night, the chairman received a letter at Hackney, from Mr. Wood, enclosing the article thus altered, in point of expression only, and desired an immediate answer, whether it was agreeable to the chairman's idea, as explained the preceding day? This article being the same as seen in the preliminary laid before the public, was returned to Mr. Wood, exactly as received, with a remonstrance in his letter in favour of the country powers, which was disregarded.

This, sir, is the substance of what Mr. Rous delivered in vindication of his conduct; and however clear and full it was then thought, and must now appear to a considering reader, who will collect and weigh the parts of it together, so as to form a true judgment of the whole; yet, as it is of some length, and of a complicated nature, I think it would not be amiss, in your next paper, to throw together some general remarks on these transactions, not only as they relate to that gentleman's

justification, but as they regard the interests of the company.

I am, sir,

Your very humble servant,

A PROPRIETOR.

The North Briton will, with the greatest cheerfulness, comply with the request of his correspondent, and on Saturday next will not only consider the justification of a worthy individual, and the interest of a respectable company, but likewise dare (for what shall not truth dare?) to pay his most humble respects to the minister, together with his high and mighty agent, Mr. Wood.

SUBSTANCE OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN
DOCTOR ARMSTRONG AND MR. WILKES.

ON Wednesday, April 7, 1773, Dr. Armstrong called on Mr. Wilkes, in Prince's-court, about two in the afternoon, and without the least ceremonial or compliment began—

Dr. Armstrong. Did you, sir, write the letters in the Public Advertiser?

Mr. Wilkes. What letters do you mean, doctor? There are many letters every day in the Public Advertiser.

Dr. Armstrong. Sir, I mean the three letters about me, and *Day, Day,** sir.

Mr. Wilkes. You may ask the printer, Mr. Woodfall. He has my orders to name me, whenever he thinks it proper, as the author of every thing I write in his paper.

Dr. Armstrong. I believe you wrote all those letters.

* This alludes to a poem written by Dr. Armstrong in the year 1763, entitled "Day; a poetical epistle from Dr. Armstrong to John Wilkes, esq."

Mr. Wilkes. What, all three, doctor? I am very roughly treated in one of them, in the first, signed *Dies*.

Dr. Armstrong. I believe you wrote that on purpose to begin the controversy. I am almost sure of it.

Mr. Wilkes. I hope you are more truly informed in other things. I know better than to abuse myself in that manner, and pity the author of such wretched stuff.

Dr. Armstrong. Did you write the other letters, sir?

Mr. Wilkes. The proper person to inquire of is Mr. Woodfall. I will not answer interrogatories. My time would pass in a strange manner if I was to answer every question, which any gentleman chose to put to me about anonymous letters.

Dr. Armstrong. Whoever has abused me, sir, is a villain; and your endeavours, sir, to set England and Scotland together are very bad.

Mr. Wilkes. The Scots have done that thoroughly, doctor, by their conduct here, par-

ticularly by their own nationality, and the outrages of lord Bute to so many English families. Whenever you think proper to call upon me in particular as a gentleman, you will find me most ready to answer the call.

Dr. Armstrong. D—n lord Bute ! It had been better for Scotland he had never been born. He has done *us* infinite mischief.

Mr. Wilkes. And *us* too : but I suppose we are not met for a dish of politics ?

Dr. Armstrong. No, but I wish there had been no union ; I am sure England is the gainer by it.

Mr. Wilkes. I will not make an essay on the advantages and disadvantages of the union.

Dr. Armstrong. I hate politics ; but I have been ill-used by you, Mr. Wilkes, on the occasion.

Mr. Wilkes. On the contrary, doctor, I was the injured friend.

Dr. Armstrong. I thought you for many years the most amiable friend in the world, and loved your company the most ; but you

distinguished yourself by grossly abusing *my* country in the *North Briton*, although I never read much of that paper.

Mr. Wilkes. You passed your time, I am satisfied, much better. Who told you, doctor, what particular numbers I wrote? It is droll, but the bitterest of those papers which was attributed to me, was a description of Scotland, first printed in the last century, on Charles the first's return from thence in 1633. Were you ever, doctor, personally attacked by me? Were you not, although a Scotsman, at the very time of the *North Briton*, complimented by me, in conjunction with Churchill, in the best thing I wrote, the mock Dedication to Mortimer.

Dr. Armstrong. To be praised with such a writer I think an abuse.

Mr. Wilkes. The world thinks far otherways of that wonderful genius Churchill; but you, doctor, have sacrificed private friendship at the altar of politics. After many years mutual intercourse of good offices, you broke every tie of friendship on no pretence

but a suspicion, for you did not ask for proof, of my having abused your country, *that* country I have for years together heard you inveigh against in the severest terms, for *nastiness and nationality*.

Dr. Armstrong. I only did it in joke, sir. You did it with bitterness ; but it was *my* country,

Mr. Wilkes. No man has abused England so much as Shakespeare ; or France so much as Voltaire ; yet they remain the favourites of two great nations, conscious of their own superiority. Were you, doctor, attacked by me in any one instance ? Was not the most friendly correspondence carried on with you the whole time, till you broke it off by a letter in 1763, in which you declared to me, that you could not, with honour, associate with one, who had distinguished himself by abusing your country, and that you remained *with all due sincerity* ? I remember that was the strange phrase.

Dr. Armstrong. You never answered that letter, sir.

Mr. Wilkes. What answer could I give, doctor? You had put a period to the intercourse between us. I still continued to our common friends to speak of you with terms of respect, while you were grossly abusing me. You said to Boswell, Millar, and others, “I hope there is a hell, that Wilkes may lie in it.”

Dr. Armstrong. In a passion I might say so. People do not often speak their minds in a passion.

Mr. Wilkes. I thought they generally did, doctor.

Dr. Armstrong. I was thoroughly provoked, but I still acknowledge my great pecuniary obligations to you, although I dare say I could have got the money elsewhere.

Mr. Wilkes. I was always happy to render you every service in my power: and I little imagined a liberal mind like yours, could have been worked up by designing men, to write me such a letter, in answer to an affectionate one I sent you on the prospect of your return.

Dr. Armstrong. I was happier with you than any man in the world for a great many years, and complimented you not a little in the *Day*, and you did not write to me for a year and a quarter after that.

Mr. Wilkes. Your memory does not serve you faithfully, doctor. In three or four months at farthest you had two or three letters together from me on your return to the head quarters of the army. I am abused in *Dies* for that publication, and the manner of it, both of which you approved.

Dr. Armstrong. I did so.

Mr. Wilkes. I was abused at first, I am told, in the manuscript of *Dies*, for having sold the copy, and put the money in my pocket, but that charge was suppressed in the printed letter.

Dr. Armstrong. I know nothing of that, and will do you justice.

Mr. Wilkes. Will you call upon Mr. D—, our common friend, your countryman, and ask him what he thinks of your conduct to me, and whether it has not been wholly unjustifiable?

Dr. Armstrong. Have I your leave to ask Mr. Woodfall, in your name, about the letter?

Mr. Wilkes. I have already told you, doctor, what directions he has from me. Take four-and-twenty hours to consider what you have to do, and let me know the result.

Dr. Armstrong. I am sorry to have taken up so much of your time, sir.

Mr. Wilkes. It stands in no need of an apology, doctor. I am glad to see you; good morrow.

N. B. These minutes were taken the same afternoon of April 7, 1773, and sent to a friend.

Day is a poetical epistle to Mr. Wilkes, as mentioned before.

Dies is a prose letter published in the Public Advertiser of March 23, 1773, followed by *Truth*, March 24, and *Nox*, April 1.

MR. WILKES'S JOURNEY TO FRANCE.

WHEN Mr. Wilkes had finished printing the *North Briton* he discharged his workmen, and resolved to pay a visit to his daughter at Paris.

In whatever measures or engagements he was concerned, an ardent attention to his daughter was always his first consideration.

He had determined upon attending parliament at the next meeting of that assembly, and therefore chose this opportunity of going to Paris, in order to return to London in proper time, to concert with his friends the measures necessary to be pursued.

While in Paris he met with a disagreeable and vexatious circumstance. It was a challenge from a young intemperate Scots officer in the French service. The particulars of this affair created some curiosity and party animadversion ; therefore they shall be related with accuracy.

MR. WILKES'S AFFAIR WITH CAPTAIN FORBES.

ON Monday morning, August 15, 1763, as Mr. Wilkes was walking with the late lord Palmerstone to Notre-Dame, a gentleman came up to him in the street, and inquired if his name was Wilkes. The gentleman was answered in the affirmative ; upon which he said, Mr. Wilkes wrote the *North Briton*, and must fight him. Mr. Wilkes desired to know what evidence the gentleman had for so round an assertion ; that he had in a moment cut short a dispute, which had a good while been agitating in England, and would not soon be over ; that a squabble in the streets was unbecoming a gentleman, and an indecent affront to the laws of the country ; that he lived at the hotel de Saxe, and wished him a good day. Mr. Forbes, in the afternoon, called at the hotel de Saxe, and left on a card, C. John Forbes. The next morning he returned about six. He said his name was Forbes, a captain in the French re-

giment of Ogilby, which had been broke, or, as it is there called, *reformed*. Mr. Wilkes regretted that he had not left on his card where he lived, to have prevented him that second trouble of coming to the hotel de Saxe, and desired to know his commands. He said that Mr. Wilkes must fight him, because he had wrote against Scotland. Mr. Wilkes asked what he had wrote, and wished to see the papers objected to, or to know what they were. Mr. Forbes replied, you have wrote against my country ; your name is Wilkes : do you not write ? Mr. Wilkes said, that he did now and then write receipts for tenants, and sometimes on post nights ; but would give no account to Mr. Forbes, nor to any man. Mr. Forbes then asked him, if he would fight him that day ; Mr. Wilkes told him that he would fight him upon his honour ; but he believed he could not indulge him that day, for he had a previous account to settle with lord Egremont, and went into the circumstances of that affair. Mr. Wilkes added, that it was very unfit captain Forbes and he

should talk over so critical a business alone : therefore desired him to return the same day at noon, and to bring one gentleman for a second along with him ; and Mr. Wilkes's friend and second would likewise attend. Mr. Wilkes declared he would leave every particular of time, place, &c. to their two friends, and would abide by their determination. Captain Forbes promised that he would bring his second ; but came alone at twelve at noon, and found monsieur Goy in Mr. Wilkes's apartments. Mr. Wilkes soon after returned. Captain Forbes insisted on Mr. Wilkes's fighting him that day, and directly. Mr. Wilkes desired him to explain the reason of such a duel to monsieur Goy ; that he knew nothing of any personal quarrel with captain Forbes, and reminded him of his promise in the morning to return with a second. Mr. Forbes said, that Mr. Wilkes knew enough ; and that he would not explain himself further. Mr. Wilkes replied, that he would not then enter further into that affair, his friend being present, and no gentleman

on the part of Mr. Forbes. Mr. Forbes then said, that his friend was near, and that he would fetch him. He accordingly went away; in a quarter of an hour he returned again alone, and said, he would bring no friend; but Mr. Wilkes should soon hear from him. Mr. Wilkes asked how he could know that the person he was conversing with was a gentleman, or was captain Forbes, having never seen him till the day before; and observed that his coming in such a manner, and refusing to bring a second, had more the air of an assassin, than of a gentleman. Mr. Forbes said, that he was well known to the prince of Soubize, and then went away.

In the afternoon the marshals of France sent and put Mr. Wilkes under arrest. Soon after, he received a visit from Mr. Macdonald, a Scottish gentleman in the French service, who told him that he came in the name of the Scots at Paris, to assure Mr. Wilkes that they entirely disapproved of captain Forbes's behaviour; and that it was only to be looked upon as the rashness of a young man of three-

and-twenty. Mr. Mackey, who was likewise in the French service, and had the cross of St. Lewis, waited afterwards on Mr. Wilkes, and repeated the same assurances.

Mr. Forbes never appeared at Paris after that day, Tuesday the 16th of August. He was for some days concealed in a house at Paris ; but as soon as opportunity permitted, he fled to England. A short time after he arrived in England, he received a letter from Lord Sandwich, then secretary of state, to embark for Portugal ; where he was taken into the Portuguese service. This circumstance gave rise to a suspicion in London, that his conduct at Paris had the approbation of some person in power.

At Paris, diligent search was made to find captain Forbes, and it was discovered that he had been for some days concealed at Mr. Murray's.* At last, captain Forbes not ap-

* The famous Alexander Murray, who was sent to Newgate on account of his conduct in the Westminster election, in the year 1751.

pearing, Mr. Murray was taken into custody, and was brought before marshal Noailles, who was president of the tribunal of the marshals of France, on Friday afternoon the 19th, at the same time with Mr. Wilkes ; and on their giving their paroles, both their guards were dismissed. When marshal Noailles asked Mr. Wilkes, what was his quarrel with captain Forbes, Mr. Wilkes only said, *monseigneur, je n'ai ni l'honneur ni l'envie de connoître Monsieur Forbes.* My lord, I have neither the honour nor the wish to know Mr. Forbes. Mr. Wilkes then, in the presence of several French gentlemen, after marshal Noailles was retired, begged Mr. Macdonald, who was an intimate friend of Mr. Forbes, to assure him, that as soon as the affair with lord Egremont was settled, if he was alive, he would indulge captain Forbes, should he choose to fight him ; and that it would be captain Forbes's own fault if he did not ; for Mr. Wilkes would meet him for that purpose any where in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America, except the dominions of France.

LETTER FROM M. GOY TO MR. MURRAY.

SIR,

I DID myself several times the honour to wait upon you, but have not been so happy as to find you at home. I intend to set off on Sunday morning for Flanders, and should be very proud to take my leave of you, therefore hope you will give orders for my being admitted to-morrow, any time the most agreeable to you.

I am, with respect,
sir, &c.

P. Goy.

Rue St. Anne, butte St. Roch,
vis-à-vis le commissaire.

No answer was returned to this letter, and on Saturday Mr. Murray would not be at home.

LETTER FROM MR. WILKES TO THE HON.
ALEXANDER MURRAY.

SIR,

I HAVE waited with no small impatience, and I believe you will agree with me, that before this, captain Forbes ought to have sent to me. You know every thing that has passed between us, and the wild extravagant wish he formed of fighting me on no pretence or provocation.

I am no prize-fighter, yet I told him that I would indulge him, and as soon as I could. I mentioned to him the affair of lord Egremont, and the previous engagement I thought myself under. I desired him to bring his second the same day at noon, and our two friends should settle between us all the particulars of time, place, &c.

I stated the circumstances of the insolence and inhumanity of lord Egremont, and my resolution of calling his lordship to account;

a resolution not formed yesterday, but what had struck me the second day of my imprisonment in the Tower, as becoming my dignity, and which, at that very time, I had mentioned to major Rainsford, the governor.

I had likewise then fixed the hour of his losing the seals, as the period I should call his lordship to that account ; and I am sure that I would have left Paris, or any other place, immediately on receiving news so interesting to myself, so welcome to the nation.

Mr. Forbes undertook, on the same morning, Tuesday the 16th of August, to return at noon, and to bring his second. You know that he came, but brought no second. Monsieur Goy, my second, attended. If Mr. Forbes had kept his promise, the trouble I am now obliged to give you, would have been unnecessary.

Lord Egremont, to my great regret, greater I believe than that of any other person, has prevented my proceeding further, and as a Frenchman would say, *il m'a joué un vilain tour.*

I am now, therefore, most entirely at captain Forbes's service, and shall wait his commands. I do not know where he is, for he has not appeared at Paris since Tuesday the 16th of August. As your house has been his asylum, I am necessitated to beg you, sir, to acquaint captain Forbes, that I will be at Menin, the first town in Austrian Flanders, on the confines of France, the 21st of this month, and that M. Goy will do me the honour of accompanying me ; but he only. I shall direct my letters to be sent there, and the moment of my arrival I shall go to the post-house.

No person but M. Goy is acquainted with any part of this transaction ; he is so obliging as to take the charge of this letter.

Give me leave to acknowledge the personal civilities you have been pleased to confer on me at Paris, and to assure you that

I am, sir,
your very humble servant,
JOHN WILKES.

Paris, Hotel de Saxe,
September 7.

Mr. Wilkes arrived at Menin the 21st in the morning, and went directly to the post-house, but found no letter there from either captain Forbes or Mr. Murray. He continued at Menin that day and the next: still no letter came. He then left a direction where he was gone, and set off for Dunkirk.

MR. WILKES'S RETURN TO ENGLAND.

MR. WILKES having no longer any prospect of meeting with captain Forbes, resolved upon returning to England to attend his duty in parliament. In the present critical situation of his affairs his appearance in parliament was essential to the support of his cause and his character. Besides, all his friends and the nation expected it. To lay his case before parliament was his ardent wish: and though he knew that the parliament which had bestowed their approbation upon all the

recent measures, was as obsequious as any agent could desire, yet he flattered himself, that the gross violations of the constitution, of the law of the land, of the privileges of parliament, which had been committed in his case, would, when they were stated to the house of commons, raise him many new friends. Filled with this hope he returned to England.

MR. WILKES'S LAST PAPER OF THE NORTH
BRITON.

THREE days before parliament met, he published another number of the North Briton, which he called No. 46, of which the following is a copy. It served to shew that he preserved his usual spirits, that he persevered in the same line of politics, and that the late events had not diminished, but rather

increased the passion of his abhorrence of the ministry. Only a few copies were printed for private circulation.

THE NORTH BRITON, N° XLVI.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1763.

Sed quanto ille magis formas se vertat in omnes,
Tanto, nate, magis contendit tenacia vincla

VIRGIL.

IT is not possible to imagine a more general satisfaction and more lively joy than appeared among all ranks of men in the beginning of the last spring, when our most excellent sovereign graciously condescended to gratify the wishes of his people, by removing the earl of Bute from the post of first commissioner of the treasury. England had long smarted under the most rapacious acts of oppression and tyranny, which were frequently, sometimes very wantonly, exercised by that insolent, over-bearing minister. A general confusion had been introduced into every department of the state; but the finances in parti-

cular, because that was the province he had peculiarly made his own, were almost ruined. The national faith, which had been so celebrated in former times, began to be held in contempt, and one of our allies made no scruple to upbraid our ministers with an absolute breach of repeated promises, and of solemn engagements. Public credit, even so early after this glorious Scottish peace, began to droop, and foreigners had already taken the alarm.

The public joy, at the removal of so corrupt and so incapable a minister, was very universal and sincere: but alas! the days of triumph, on an event which had so long been the object of our most ardent wishes, were few and clouded. The nation hoped, as the natural and immediate consequence, to have seen the restoration of Mr. Pitt, and of the great whig families, the ancient and the only real friends of the house of Brunswick. The public voice seemed to have reached the ear of the sovereign. It was not at first believed that only the name would

have been changed, and that the administration of affairs could be entrusted to three known, hackneyed tools of that very minister, who were at one moment openly, at another with a little feint, to pursue the same system, the same unnational measures: yet, from a temporary despair, this soon became the case. *Res ad Triarios rediit.*

These three political *Horatii*, almost immediately after the removal of the Scot, obtained a pretty explicit declaration in their favour, and at once leagued together, not for the salvation, but for the plunder of the state, for the maintenance of their own power, and the securing to themselves, their relations, and even new-born babes, the most desirable possessions and reversions in the kingdom, in our conquests and our colonies. Not one of these men possessed, in the smallest degree, the affections, or even the good opinion of the people. They seemed content to bear the curses of their country, provided they could share among themselves the most lucrative offices of the state. The pride and insolence

of one of them, was never equalled by any of his countrymen, and had before made him as universally odious in private, as he soon became in public life. A savage disposition, and brutal manners, which early appeared in his juvenile pleasures, were joined in him to that spirit of despotism and cruelty, so characteristic of the whole Stuart line, the love of which his father, if he did not inculcate into his children, had yet carried with him quite through life. An ignorance scarcely to be credited, and a mulishness, which could never be conquered, rendered him the contempt of all, who were so unhappy as to be under a necessity of attending upon him—But he has paid the debt to nature, and is gathered to the dull of ancient days.—The other lord has been said to concur very unwillingly in the prosecution of the same odious schemes: but the state of affairs at home, and the necessity of regular quarterly payments, drove him to an entire acquiescence with every measure prescribed.—As to the commoner, he was chosen, because he had gone through the se-

veral departments of government, was universally acknowledged to be the dullest and most laborious pack-ass of the state, and, in his youth, had seen a little practice in law proceedings. He was therefore pitched upon to suggest the various modes of carrying into execution the many projected acts of oppression, and at the same time keeping just to the windward of the law, or within the letter of an act of parliament. He was the true author of the most grievous part of that cruel act for the new excise on cyder and perry, by which the excise officer has forced his way even into private houses, on this side the Tweed; for such is the partiality of this tax, that it will affect only a few English counties, but not one Scottish. It must be owned, that no man was ever fitter for the business he undertook. He has no passions. A perfect apathy reigns in his breast, save that an overflowing of the gall is now and then a good deal troublesome to himself, though very little to any other person. He is incapable of pity, of remorse, or even humanity, and in-

deed, of all those fine feelings which men of more delicate mould, and lively parts, relish in so exquisite a degree. His constant gravity and solemn deportment were of real service; for they impressed an idea of dignity and importance on the common beholder; and his want of passions gave him an opportunity of affecting a wonderful sanctity of morals.—*Tertius è cælo cecidit Cato.*

Under such an administration, is it at all surprising that our affairs at home are declining, and our glory abroad sullied? Some few changes have indeed been made; but have such men* been brought in as had

* Of these men, the most infamous in every respect, was the E— of ——. He had passed his youth in so abandoned and profligate a manner, that, when he arrived at the middle age of life, he did not, in the opinion of the world, remain in possession of the smallest degree of virtue or honour. His conduct, with respect to women, was not only loose and barefaced, but perfidious, mean, and tricking. He was restrained by no considerations of private character, nor checked by any regard to public decorum. Frauds of the lowest nature, inforced by perjuries and falsehoods, were his only arts.

the confidence of the nation ? I will venture to affirm that a more universal discontent

With respect to men, he had early lost every sentiment of honour, and was grown exceedingly necessitous from the variety of his vices, as well as rapacious from the lust of gratifying them. Nature denied him wit, but gave him a species of buffoonery of the lowest kind, which was ridiculous in a man of fashion, and fit only for the dregs of the people. In business he was slow, tedious, and dull. He was sent, on the part of England, to conclude the general peace at Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1748 ; where he made such childish blunders, that an able and experienced minister was obliged to be sent from Vienna on purpose to do the business of the plenipotentiary. The minister declared, on his arrival, that no one point of real importance had been settled. Even the usual and necessary forms of the ratifications of former treaties had been omitted, by which our greatest commercial advantages, particularly with Spain, would have been sacrificed. Since that period, to the present year, lord ——— was laid aside, as totally unfit for any arduous or even serious business, nor has any thing of moment been, by any administration, trusted to him alone. Almost every good man having been forced out, or voluntarily left the present ministry, the seals of the secretary of state of the northern department were put into his hands ; and the nation, from that moment, saw that

never appeared among the people than at present. We were told, that by the late peace a full security was obtained for our American colonies. Is that the fact? The numbers of our fellow subjects basely murdered in the time of this profound glorious peace, give the lie to the flattering addresses of some vile hirelings in their mother country, and demand vengeance on the ministers, who have so scandalously neglected, and left in a state of insecurity, not only our new conquests, but our most valuable colonies. Those are made a prey to the rapacity of four hungry Scottish governors; these are left exposed to the barbarity of savages, whom the intrigues of our new friends, the French, and repeated injuries from our own people, have, at length, armed against us. As to the merit of three of these gentlemen, I am a perfect stranger: the demerit of the governor of

the administration were determined to aim a deadly blow at the vitals of liberty, and the English constitution; and therefore had pitched on the most profligate fellow of the age, for that most profligate attempt.

Quebec, the world has seen ; for he had very nearly lost the most important conquest we made during the whole war ; a conquest purchased with the blood of one of our first heroes, the immortal Wolfe. Among the variety of new measures, which this nation must ever deplore, the appointment of military men to civil governments is not the least to be lamented : a policy reserved for such puny politicians, as we have seen taken from the Cocoa and Arthur's, to make ministers of, and which is deservedly become the ridicule of all Europe. I will only further observe on this head, that the partiality of these appointments to every new government we have acquired, plainly marks the same hand so fatal and hostile to England, which instead of holding the fair balance, has, by violence and injustice, kept down one scale, and made the other kick the beam. A gazette so late as that of Saturday* the eighth

* The king has been pleased to constitute and appoint the honourable James Murray, esq. to be his ma-

of October, must convince every man, that even now Scottish influence is not at an end, and that all pretences of that kind, whether they are made by men in or out of power, are captious and delusive.

As to our affairs at home, I am free to declare that almost the only healthy symptom of the state seems to me the noble spirit exerted by our countrymen in the counties of

hesty's captain general and governor in chief in and over his majesty's province of Quebec in America.

The king has been pleased to constitute and appoint James Grant, esq. to be his majesty's captain general and governor in chief in and over his majesty's province of East Florida in America.

The king has been pleased to constitute and appoint George Johnstone, esq. to be his majesty's captain general and governor in chief in and over his majesty's province of West Florida in America.

The king has been pleased to constitute and appoint Robert Melvill, esq. to be his majesty's captain general and governor in chief in and over his majesty's islands of Granada, the Grenadines, Dominico, St. Vincent, and Tobago in America; and of all other islands and territories adjacent thereto, and which now are, or heretofore have been dependent thereupon.

Devon, Cornwall, &c. The summer has not passed in inglorious ease, neither in the west nor the south of this once happy island, and I trust that the holy flame of liberty, which has glowed in the hearts of many, will be caught by all the representatives of this free country. Parliaments are, by the constitution of our government, the guardians of liberty. Before them it is the duty of the people to lay their grievances, and it then equally becomes the duty of our representatives to redress them. I have therefore no doubt that very early in the ensuing session of parliament our countrymen will be delivered from this new bondage of excise, the only badge of slavery which this kingdom knows under the mild government of the most amiable of our princes. A British house of commons will ever be faithful to the great and important trust reposed in them by the collective body of the people ; and when the sense of the nation is so clearly known, there ought surely to be no hesitation in any administration to conform to it. A neighbouring

kingdom has very lately given us a proof of that constitutional spirit and love of freedom, which has ever distinguished those true and zealous whigs. The lord lieutenant of Ireland, by several leading passages in his speech to parliament, seemed servilely to beg their approbation of the late peace. He vainly hoped that this sycophant court language would be echoed back in the address ; but an honest house of commons there, greatly superior to all undue influence, would give no congratulation on such a peace, nor prostitute the words glorious, honourable, or adequate, to what has disgraced us to all the world. On the contrary, those generous sons of freedom, embarked in the same noble cause with ourselves, declare in an animated manner, that they cheerfully supported such heavy burthens during the continuance of the late successful war, and in the coldest way, but just mention the re-establishment of a general peace—The parliaments of France likewise have in the course of the summer set an example of freedom, which some other king-

doms would do well to imitate, and have presented such memorials as the freest state in Europe might be proud to own. They have not been afraid to declare that the piety, the honour, the justice of their king had been surprised, that his solemn promises, and sacred word, had been violated. They have dared to approach the throne with the boldest and most unwelcome truths, and have made bad ministers tremble. They have besides drawn such faithful pictures of the extreme miseries of their bleeding country, as must confound our ministerial hirelings; and the various facts they mention demonstrate the total inability of France to continue the war. Her credit was entirely lost, and her marine annihilated. How she has since recruited, and in what a state of recovery her finances are, we must I fear too soon with anguish experience. This is the more to be lamented, because the public securities of this kingdom have fallen so low, that foreign nations begin to lose all opinion of that credit on whose broad basis our commerce arose,

and increased to a magnitude, which has raised the admiration and envy of all other states. The public funds in a very few months, in this early dawning of peace, have fallen above fourteen per cent. England appears now in danger of ceasing to be the great mart, the centre, of the commerce and riches of the world, from the fluctuating state of her public credit. That beautiful and wondrous fabric, the work of ages, the pride and glory of Britain, as well as the jealousy of her most powerful neighbours, which has survived two desperate Scottish rebellions, seems at last doomed to fall a sacrifice to the incapacity and treachery of a set of men, formerly the objects of the contempt and ridicule, now of the abhorrence and hatred of their country.

JUDGE JEFFREYS' GENERAL WARRANT.

THE following letters passed between Mr. Wilkes and a Mr. L. a few years since, on the subject of a general warrant issued by lord chief justice Jeffreys, and are now, by the kindness of an eminent solicitor, presented to the public.

Copy of the Warrant.

WHEREAS I am informed that Angl. Ss. there are divers ill-disposed persons who write, print, and publish, treasonable, popish, seditious, and scandalous books, pamphlets, and pictures, endeavouring thereby to disturb the minds of his majesty's subjects, and the peace of this kigdom:

These are therefore in his majesty's name to charge and command you and every of you, upon sight hereof, to be aiding and assisting to Robert Stephens, his majesty's messenger for the press, in making diligent

search in all suspected places, and to seize all such books, pamphlets, and pictures, as he shall be informed of, in any booksellers', printers', binders' shops or warehouses, or in any ship or vessel, or other place whatsoever, to the end they may be disposed of according to law. Likewise, if you should be informed of the authors, printers, publishers, or any other persons in whose custody you shall find such books, pamphlets, or pictures, you are to apprehend and bring them before me, or any of his majesty's justices of the court of king's-bench, or some other of his majesty's justices of peace, to be proceeded against according to law. Hereof fail not at your perils. Dated the 1st day of September, Anno Dom. 1684.

GEO. JEFFREYS.

To all mayors, justices, sheriffs, bailiffs,
constables, headboroughs, and all
other officers and ministers whom
these may concern.

To Robert Stephens, messenger for
the press, and customhouse waiter
and searcher.

Monday, 27th August, 1781, the original warrant was sent to Mr. Wilkes in the following letter :

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to enclose an original warrant of the noted chief justice Jeffreys, which it will afford me peculiar pleasure if you shall think curious enough to preserve. I do not recollect to have ever seen any such printed, or indeed taken notice of in any history of England ; and therefore imagine they were not looked upon formerly in the same justly odious light they are at present.

The kingdom is certainly much indebted to you, sir, for the abolition of such vile instruments of power ; and I own I never could read the warrant enclosed without feeling, as an Englishman, my obligations for your conduct in that important business.

I hope posterity will do justice to your merits in so strenuously opposing the Jeffreys of the present reign ; and that your public

services will engage its admiration and respect to the remotest period of time.

I have the honour to be, sir,
your obedient and most humble servant,
T. L.

Shaftesbury, Dorsetshire,
Monday, 27 August 1781.

Mr. Wilkes's Answer.

Prince's-court, Westminster,
August 29, 1781.

SIR,

I CANNOT delay a single post acknowledging the distinguished honour I have just received by your very polite letter, and the present of a great curiosity with which it was accompanied. To have the warm approbation of the zealous friends of this free country and constitution, is one of the highest gratifications I can enjoy. It will ever be my ambition to transmit my name to posterity as that of a man sincere and honest in the public cause, and inflexible in the defence of

our laws and liberties, over which we cannot keep too watchful an eye, when we observe almost all the neighbouring nations sunk in abject despotism.

The general warrant of lord chief justice Jeffreys was new historical matter, I confess, to me. I observe that it is issued at a degrading period, when Charles II. was almost absolute, in September 1684, after the city of London, and most of the corporations, had been tricked out of their charters. It was a very bold step of Jeffreys; for his predecessor, sir William Scrogs, so lately as in 1680, had been impeached by the house of commons, for having, “since his being made chief justice of the court of king’s-bench, in an arbitrary manner, granted divers general warrants, for attaching the persons and seizing the goods of his majesty’s subjects, not named or described particularly in the said warrants.”

I should felicitate myself, sir, if any lucky circumstance might bring you soon to the capital, and to Prince’s-court, to have an

opportunity of convincing you with what true regard I am,

Your obliged and very humble servant,
JOHN WILKES.

A LETTER ON THE PUBLIC CONDUCT OF
MR. WILKES.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

[This letter was first published in the Political Register. But Mr. Wilkes, at different times afterwards, made several alterations in it, and several additions to it. The following is printed from his last corrected copy; and as it contains a recapitulation of events, it will properly precede the many particulars, related in the correspondence]

Την ελευθεριαν τὸ καλλισον καὶ περιμαχιμωτατον αθλον.
Plutarch in the Life of T. Q. Flaminius.

SIR,

AFTER the great variety of pieces, which to this hour have appeared for and against Mr. Wilkes, that subject does not seem yet exhausted, nor indeed is every particular of importance relative to his public conduct hi-

thereto known and authenticated. I say, sir, public conduct, for I am entirely of opinion with the gentleman, who declares, "I do not think myself at liberty to scan the private actions of any man, but have a right to consider the conduct of every man in public, and to approve or to condemn his doings, as they appear to me to be calculated, either for the good or the hurt of his country."—

*A Letter concerning Libels, Warrants, &c. published in 1764, by J. Almon.**—I shall not now stay to show how far the equity of this rule was violated by the concealed author himself before he got half through his work, in a manner equally indecent and unjust to a sick and absent friend, whom he cruelly wounded; but I shall venture to offer a few tolerable gleanings.

The public, sir, have a right to ask why Mr. Wilkes did not personally attend the

* This celebrated tract has been ascribed to many gentlemen. But the real author has not been named. He was a noble peer.

trials for the re-publication of the North Briton, No. 45, and the Essay on Woman, as he did all the actions brought by the printers apprehended under the general warrant. We ought likewise to be told why he was not present in the house of commons, when the charge against him was heard on the 19th of January, 1764. The justice of the nation, and his own personal honour, demanded his appearance. He had made an appeal to his country, and the cause of liberty had a particular claim on a man, who had pledged himself in its defence. He was prevented, not by fear, to which I believe him a stranger, but by a prohibition from the highest of all powers, by a dangerous illness. Towards the end of December, 1763, he went, during the recess of parliament, to pass the holidays with an only daughter, who was at Paris for a part of her education. That journey being generally made in four days, often in three, the distance was of no consequence, since in so short a time he could hear from his friends. He was seized at Paris with a vio-

lent fever. A considerable inflammation, with other bad symptoms, attended the dangerous wound he received in a duel with Mr. Martin. In this condition he transmitted to the speaker, on the 11th of January, 1764, an original certificate of his ill health, signed by the French king's physician, and a surgeon of his army. He requested in the letter a more distant day, that he might have it in his power to attend the discussion of points, so very important in themselves, and in which he was so materially concerned; but the decree of expulsion had passed the lips of the Scottish minister to his slaves, the ministers of the day, to whom for a short time he had delegated his omnipotence. They were impowered in a proper manner to persuade the same famous majority in the lower house, which had been induced to approve the peace of Paris, and in the first year of it to establish the late detested excise on cyder and perry, not only to expel Mr. Wilkes, but likewise to vote him the author of the *North Briton*, No. 45, without the oath of

any witness, or the shadow of legal proof. According to the constitution of England, this being a fact, ought to have been tried by a jury of twelve men, and not inquired into by witnesses at the bar, who were not sworn. This direct attack on the rights of their countrymen in so important a point as the trial by jury, would have surprised the world in any other body of men, but these had before voted away their own privileges, or rather the privileges of the nation, for they are strictly the rights of the constituents, who confer them on their representatives in parliament. The constitution gives privilege of parliament * as one of the best barriers

* "It was not made to screen criminals, but to preserve the very life and being of parliament; for when our ancestors considered, that the law had lodged the great powers of arrest, indictment, and information in the crown, they saw the parliament would be undone, if during the time of privilege the royal process should be admitted in any misdemeanor whatsoever; therefore, they excepted none. Where the abuse of power ought never to be given, because redress comes too late.

against the violence of the crown, which might otherwise, in an important moment, in the last noble struggle of expiring liberty, seize not five, as a former Stuart would have done, but five hundred, deputies of the people. They had done this in so intricate and doubtful a case, as that of a real, or pretended libel. They even went so far as to thank the crown for the tender regard expressed for the privileges of the house, in the case of Mr. Wilkes, although the court of common pleas had unanimously released him, because his imprisonment was a violation of the privileges of the house, and those judges on oath were obliged to consider the privileges of parliament as a part of the law of the land. I suppose their decision in his

“ A parliament under perpetual terror of imprisonment, can neither be free, nor bold, nor honest, and if this privilege was once removed, the most important question might be irrecoverably lost, or carried by a sudden irruption of messengers, let loose against the members half an hour before the debate.”

Lords’ Protest, 29 Nov. 1763.

favour against the two lords of his majesty's most honourable privy council, and principal secretaries of state, who both signed the warrant of commitment, is now acknowledged to be legal, for the president of that court, who delivered their opinion and his own, has since been promoted to the first dignity in the law, and is at this hour lord high chancellor of Great Britain. In other instances, notwithstanding the clear precedent on their own journals, of a chief justice impeached for "having, in an arbitrary manner, granted divers general warrants for attaching the persons, and seizing the goods of his majesty's subjects," the express vote "that the searching and sealing of the chambers, studies and papers, of members of parliament, and issuing out warrants for that purpose, are breaches of privilege;" and the remarkable case in point, "that Mr. Laurence Whittacre, being a member of parliament, and entering into the chamber of sir John Elliot, being likewise a member in that parliament, searching of his trunks and papers, and seal-

ing of them, is guilty of a breach of privilege of parliament;" and Mr. Wilkes had, on the very first day of the session in 1762, made a complaint against the under-secretary, Mr. Wood, the solicitor of the treasury, Mr. Webb, &c. and all the facts were of public notoriety, yet the majority on the 14th of February 1764, arbitrarily voted that the complaint against them should be discharged, yet without any declaration of their reasons for so strange a proceeding, or asserting the innocence of the parties under so heinous a charge. The cruelty of Mr. Wilkes's treatment in the Tower, to which he was committed a close * prisoner even for a misdemeanor, and the suffering no person for three days to come near a member of parliament to bail him, although committed for a baila-

* "The law of England appoints imprisonment "in custodiam not in pœnam," acknowledges no close imprisonment, whereas I was kept with the most extreme rigour."—Algernon Sydney's *Apology* in the day of his death. Page 173.

ble offence, were likewise entirely overlooked by a majority, glorying in a blind submission to the inhuman dictates of a cruel, despotic, and remorseless minister. Thanks to the wisdom of our ancestors, who planned the noble constitution of this country, that house of commons is now dead, but the memory of their infamy is immortal. They were suffered to die a natural death, although they had long survived the good opinion, and totally lost the confidence of their masters. No age produced so great a number of profligate and prostitute senators. After the total loss of the liberties of Rome, Tiberius did not find a senate so slavish, and even the pensionary parliament of Charles II. must now cease to be the most infamous in the annals of England.

Mr. Wilkes continued very ill during the months of January and February, nor was he tolerably recovered till the end of April. He seldom ventured abroad, even in March that year. The majority had made a pretence, that the certificate of his bad state of

health was not authenticated before a notary public. He therefore, in vindication of his honour, transmitted to the speaker, on the 5th of February, a fresh certificate, which proved that the former was in the due form, and gave the particulars of his illness to that day. This was attested by two notaries public, and the English ambassador. The trials in the king's-bench however came on the 21st of February, the alteration of the records having been made only the day before. The next French mail brought to him, languishing in bed, as a balm to his wounds, an account of the surprising transactions of those two days, although by the preceding post he had received the most positive assurance that the trials were put off, together with copies of counter-notices, signed by the summoning officer, which had been sent to several of the jury. Could he have known the records would be altered after he had pleaded, he would certainly have given orders not to make any defence, and have sought a constitutional remedy. The proceeding to trial under such

circumstances, when his solicitor had protested against the alteration, shewed how determined his enemies were, at any rate, to make sure of his conviction. If the alteration had not been made, the original records were too loose and vague to have convicted him. The information must have been quashed.* Could he suspect the alteration, which was deferred almost to the last hour? Lord Mansfield personally went through the whole of this business. The alteration of the records was made under his immediate inspection at his own house, and he tried both the causes. The false and cankered Scot, whose

* “ The common opinion among lawyers has always been, that no judge, in a criminal proceeding, ought to know any thing of the record before the trial comes on, unless one of the parties, in open court, move something thereon; because a judge is to be unprejudiced and impartial. The making of an immaterial alteration in any chamber would be folly, the making of a material one, without consent, seems to be injustice, seeing it might prevent and remove an objection fatal after trial, in arrest of judgment. And what attorney in his senses would complain to any court against the president in

pestilential breath blasted all our warrior's laurels, now exulted, and thought his subtle countryman had made him for ever safe from the most dangerous of his enemies, for that Mr. Wilkes had received the *coup de grace* by the two verdicts, and the outlawry which probably would follow. Could lord Mansfield have imagined that Mr. Wilkes would have dared to return to England, I believe he would neither have tried the two causes himself, nor have ventured upon the alteration of the records.

The first plan of the Scottish minister's revenge was still deeper laid. A complaint had

it? I challenge this sophist to produce one adjudged precedent of such an alteration. His supposition of there being no difference in legal signification between the words *tenor* and *purport*, is grounded in ignorance; the former having been determined to import an exact recital, and the other only the general meaning and effect, of any deed or paper. For which reason the first has been held to be sufficient, and the other insufficient to ground a conviction."—Postscript to a Letter concerning Libels, Warrants, the Seizure of Papers, &c.

been purposely made to the house of lords by the bishop of Gloucester, that the name of Warburton had been put to some notes of the *Essay on Woman*. The bishop, in this affair, was, however, only coadjutor to a* lay lord, *homini post homines natos turpissimo, sceleratissimo, contaminatissimo*, who first moved the complaint, so much to the astonishment of his brother peers, that † one of them said, “he never before heard the devil preach a sermon against sin.” It had therefore been determined, that after the expulsion from the house of commons, which was already bargained for, he should be committed to Newgate on this pretended breach of the bishop’s privilege, and continue there till a verdict was found against him. He would then be in safe custody to receive the sentence of the king’s-bench. The success of this ministerial craft was certain, had Mr. Wilkes been in a capacity of returning to England at the beginning of the year 1764. When he was

* Earl of Sandwich. † Lord Le Despencer.

able, after the two trials and the expulsion, if he had returned during the lawless rule of an administration, which had sacrificed the liberties of the subject, and even their own security, to gratify the favourite's lust of revenge, he ought to have lodged in Moor-fields. He carried on steadily, all this time, the causes against lord Halifax, and they were only suspended by his outlawry, which took place in November 1764. The day, on which the writs of error were allowed in 1768, he resumed the attack, and I believe his lordship will not now be much longer able to mock the justice of the nation. On the changes of the ministry, with pleasing, but delusive hopes, in 1766 he twice

— review'd his native shore,
Much fam'd for gen'rous steeds, for beauty more,

as old Homer says of Greece, and is equally true of England, but one of the ministers wanted the power, and the other the will, to do him justice. The marquis was in his

heart the warm friend of liberty and his country.

Mr. Wilkes was outlawed for contumacy in not appearing to receive sentence. The courts of law have always looked on outlawries as odious. The process of outlawry is to compel an appearance: as soon as an appearance is made, the court ought to be satisfied. When, therefore, he came into the court of king's-bench, and declared an entire submission to the laws of his country, it was most natural to imagine the outlawry would have fallen of course, sentence been pronounced, and the law fully satisfied. His counsel insisted on this, and likewise pointed out many defects in the form of the outlawry, which proved it erroneous and invalid. He had appeared, and declared himself the person against whom two verdicts were found at that very bar, but the most ridiculous, the most farcical scene imaginable followed. The judges (*credite posteri!*) agreed not to know him, and he was suf-

ferred, notwithstanding the two convictions on record, together with an outlawry, to depart the court of king's-bench in as full security as any of the numerous and astonished spectators. It was then the determination to have continued the outlawry. The speech delivered by lord Mansfield on the reversal was composed, or rather translated from the Latin, about that time, evidently as an apology for the establishing of it. A week after this, Mr. Wilkes sent to the sheriff's officer to execute the *capias utlagatum* upon him at a fixed hour in his own apartment. He attended the officer into court the same morning, on the 27th of April, but it was not till the 9th of June, when the outlawry was reversed. It was then at last declared originally null and invalid. This long delay was the more extraordinary, because by his express orders the counsel had refused to argue that point any more after the first hearing, although pressed to it by the judges. His reason was, that the public had declared an entire satisfaction in the state of the argu-

ment, as left by Mr. serjeant Glynn. Lord Mansfield reversed the outlawry, merely on an error stated by the serjeant in the form, not on the large and liberal ideas of law and justice, on which the greatest stress had been laid in the pleadings. This defect was the omission of two words, *pro comitatu*. Mr. Wilkes however, I believe, owes the reversal of his outlawry to no legal pleadings, no subtle arguments, or nice distinctions, to no pretended failure of form where no form whatever is prescribed, but to the temper and high spirit of the times, to the people of England in general, more than to any one man. He has that most essential obligation to the nation at large, not to the kindness of any particular.

The little piece of chicane I have mentioned in the English law is only to be paralleled by a similar nicety among the Romans, which gave the pretext to a like reversal of the proscription of Cicero. The law against him was bad grammar and false Latin, for the tense was mistaken. It was drawn by

Sextus Clodius, the Wedderburn of the Roman bar, but instead of *interdicatur*, it was *interdictum sit*, which Cicero declares rendered it null. *At quid tulit legum scriptor peritus, callidus? Velitis, jubeatis, ut M. Tullio aqua et ignis interdicatur? non tulit ut interdicatur: quid ergo? ut interdictum sit.* Afterwards he observes, *Quid si iis verbis scripta est ista proscriptio, ut se ipsa dissolvat?* He gives the reasons at large, *quod factum non est ut sit factum, ferri ad populum, aut verbis ulla sanciri, aut suffragiis confirmari potest? &c. &c.*

I shall now, sir, give you my opinion on another point of importance among the charges brought against Mr. Wilkes. He is said to have spurned at all law and government, to have raised and fomented the riots and tumults, so frequent of late years in this kingdom. The whole of his conduct demonstrates the injustice and malice of this charge. The distractions and confusions in all public affairs spring from a very different cause, from the general discontent of the people, who, in the fatal effects, observe and smart

for the unhappy influenee over the sovereign of a free country, which a man has obtained, who wants wisdom, and holds principles incompatible with freedom, as Mr. Pitt said, although he has been contradicted by lord Chatham. Mr. Wilkes has irreproachably the merit of a good subject, for he has always paid a due respect to the laws, a reverence to the constitution, an obedience to the power of the magistrate, and to all just authority. Under repeated oppressions by the hand of power, he has only sought the legal redress. He has claimed the protection of the laws against acts of injustice, violence, and ministerial robbery. The laws have fully justified the appeal. His enemies have been convicted of many atrocious, illegal acts, and condemned by more than one sovereign court of justice. He is indeed, sir, a man more sinned against, than sinning. After the sharpest provocations, the conduct of Mr. Wilkes has been cool, temperate, and prudent. When he was released from the Tower, he went soon into a retired part of Surrey.

He visited his friends in the city, after that triumph of the laws in his person over ministerial tyranny, only in the most private manner, to avoid every possibility of a tumult among the people, who thought him greatly injured, and had warmly espoused his cause in gratitude to a man, *qui libertatem civibus stabiliverat*, in Tully's phrase. He did not make a vain foolish progress through several counties, like the mad tory parson in queen Anne's time. He went only once into Buckinghamshire, and he chose the king's birthday for the time of his coming among his constituents at Aylesbury, that the rejoicings on his return to them might distinguish that auspicious day. On the occasion he gave an entertainment to the borough, after which he returned to town.

The same spirit of moderation and prudence dictated all his future measures, and he studiously avoided every thing which could inflame. Since his last return to England, the city and Middlesex elections have given fresh proofs of his love of decency, peace,

and order. He exerted himself during the whole time of the poll at Guildhall to preserve the peace of the city, and his last words on quitting the hustings were, “ Gentlemen, I recommend it to you in the strongest manner to exert yourselves to preserve the peace and quiet of this great city.” That attention to the public good in such a moment of humiliation to an unsuccessful candidate, carries with it, in my idea, particular merit, but the action, by which it was followed, gives it great lustre. The livery in general had been disgusted by the partiality of the first city magistrate, and irritated by the ministerial orders to vote for their creatures, which were issued from some of the boards. Those orders had appeared in most of the public prints. The people were fully informed of every transaction. They thought the election unfair from the beginning, and were farther provoked the last day at the shutting the great iron gates during the time of the poll, by which many of the livery were prevented getting into the hall. It was believed

that they intended at the close, before the numbers could be cast up and proclaimed, to have seized and destroyed the poll books, that the whole proceedings, which they considered as irregular, might be void. The moment of the clerks delivering the poll books to the sheriffs on the hustings in order to be cast up by them, was to have been the signal. Mr. Wilkes was informed of this, and he prevented it by retiring as soon as the poll was finished, before the books could be cast up, even by the clerks, and delivered. The greater part of the people, as on the former days, followed Mr. Wilkes. All the other candidates remained in the hall with their friends, the sheriffs proceeded to cast up the books, and the declaration of the numbers on the final close of the poll was by this prudent measure made with very little confusion. The former days of the poll Mr. Wilkes had attended the casting up of the books, even by the sheriffs, and the affixing of the numbers for public inspection at the upper end of

Guildhall. One of the successful candidates thanked him publicly, as he was retiring from the hustings, for the excellency of his conduct.

The Middlesex election furnishes another proof of the care Mr. Wilkes has taken to maintain decency and good order. A great riot was apprehended, which seemed to be the favourite, and indeed then became the only resource of the other party. The outlawry subsisting, they had with the basest views most falsely and infamously asserted in the public papers, that he might be killed like a wild beast, and ought to be shot like a mad dog; that such an action would be not only innocent, but meritorious. He dispersed through the county many thousand addresses to the freeholders, entreating their assistance for the preservation of the public peace, without a hint of his private safety. He might certainly have been attended by a numerous cavalcade to Brentford. Many of the freeholders pressed it as a proper, and the

usual, measure; but he chose the most private manner, and went there the evening before the election with only one * gentleman, whose friendship he ranks among the honours and blessings of his life. The election was carried through in the greatest freedom and order, with a general sobriety never before seen on such an occasion, entirely owing to the influence of Mr. Wilkes and his friends. On the same principle of preventing even the possibility of a tumult or riot, he declined the being chaired, and other usual honours.

I am ashamed, sir, to have dwelt so long on a point, which may be proved by the whole of Mr. Wilkes's conduct. Even his present situation has given him a glorious opportunity, which I do not recollect has happened to any other man, of shewing his obedience to the laws and to the civil magistrate. After the refusal of bail by his judges before sentence, in his way to prison, he was rescued

* The rev. Mr. John Horne, minister of New Brentford.

by his countrymen. The officers of justice, who had the charge of him, were in the utmost danger. Mr. Wilkes had that day the happiness of preserving three lives, although perhaps not the three he would have chosen from the whole species. Afterwards, by a stratagem, and in disguise, he escaped into the prison, to which he had been sentenced in the morning. The marshal soon came, still pale, trembling, and aghast, ready to fall on his knees no less from fear than gratitude, thanked him in the warmest terms, and said, “it was impossible he could continue in the king’s-bench prison twenty-four hours, if there was any honour in government.” He has now been there above half a year, and I dare say he will pass the next eighteen months in the same place, for although the envenomed cause of all his, and the nation’s wrongs is fled, yet the sting is left behind. The accursed thing is not now indeed in the midst of us, but we do not know how soon the vengeance of heaven may, for our sins, chastise us in as full a measure of wrath as

before. Since his letter to the king in the beginning of March, Mr. Wilkes has made no * application to any person whatever respecting his pardon, and I prophecy that he will be left where he is till the 18th of April 1770, with only the testimony of a good conscience, the satisfaction of having done real services to his country, and the love of a grateful nation. He will then emerge with dignity and glory, for I believe he will have the confidence of the public enough to carry through many constitutional points of liberty, in conjunction with other true lovers of their country, and perhaps to complete the plan of freedom, which even the glorious revolution left imperfect.

In the mean time, under the weight of the most unjust oppressions, Mr. Wilkes's friends have the comfort of finding that he possesses

* Many persons affecting to believe that the king never received that letter, sir Joseph Mawbey delivered into his majesty's own hands a petition from Mr. Wilkes in the month following the date of this epistle.

peace and fortitude of mind, that he does not bate a jot of heart or hope, but still bears up and steers right onward. He might add that all he has suffered has been

In liberty's defence, his noble task,
Of which all Europe rings from side to side.

I hope he will atone for the dissipation of too gay a youth, and that the rest of his life will be usefully employed for this nation, whether in the gloom of a prison, or at large among cheerful and genial friends, of sense and honour, with a steady, disinterested, and inviolable attachment to the cause of liberty. After a few tedious months he will look back with joy on his past sufferings, and the happy consequences of them to this kingdom. That reflection will give a keener relish to what I believe he may now expect since his return to England. I trust that he will no more be a wanderer, nor lost in the primrose path of pleasure, but that we shall see him on every great occasion sacrificing to public vir-

tue, at all times happy and free in his native country, in the bosom of philosophy and friendship. Although he has suffered a long exile, and been broken on the wheel of fortune, yet being at last restored to the land of freedom, when all his cruel wounds are at length healed and forgotten, I expect that among his household deities he will erect a temple to Liberty, and dedicate an altar *fortunæ reduci.*

I am, &c.

END OF VOL. I.



